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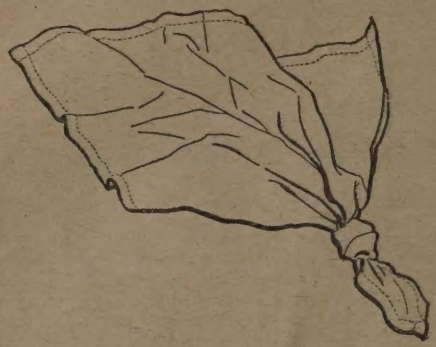

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Local Government Service

URNAL OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICERS

)S. 18 & 19 VOL. XXIV JULY—AUGUST 1947 THREEPENCE

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CAN WE IMPROVE CONFERENCE?

WHAT is to be done about Conference? That something must be done would pear to be common ground. Of many egates heard to express their view of the uthport gathering, none was satisfied. agreed that the hall, though small for vast an audience, was comfortable, the idspeaker system efficient, delegates entive and diligent. But most were dispointed. Conference as a whole, they mplained, was "flat, stale and unprofitle." It lacked the fire, the sparkle, the nviction, of its more memorable pre-cessors. Debates, even on topics expected evoke lively division of view, were tepid d colourless, sham fights with neither otagonist nor antagonist appearing greatly care whether he won or lost, and Conence itself showing little interest in either battle or its result. It missed a theme, message, an inspiration. It was dull.

ucial Decisions

That is not to say that it was unimportant. some respects, it was highly important, and ay yet be remembered as marking a turning-int in the Association's history. It took ALGO a step towards affiliation to the U.C.: not an irrevocable step, but one which, we gauge the mood of delegates aright, nders it probable. It committed the N.E.C. an attempt to persuade the National Joint uncil to depart from one of the fundamental stulates upon which the Charter was negoti-d—namely, that it should be a standard, plicable to the whole of that large section of service to which it applies, and allowing no deviation either down—or up—and to ard the Charter as a minimum, permitting local upward variations. It rejected the ggestion that NALGO should campaign a national wages policy designed to stabilise ges and thus check inflation. It agreed, eit reluctantly, with the employers' demand abandonment of the cost-of-living bonus favour of consolidation of bonus with salary provided that consolidation produces some rked improvement on existing rates of pay. ove all, it made clear that members are far m being satisfied with salaries and con-ions as the Charter has established them, d are insistent in demanding early and sub-ntial improvement of both.

These are all decisions of major policy of tentially far-reaching importance, and, in bating them, Conference was performing its oper function and, on the whole, performing well. The complaint of the critics is not rected at that. Their complaint, rather, is at Conference devoted too little of its limited ne to such matters, and too much to extra-ous and minor topics, with the result that ier subjects of importance had to be rushed rough with inadequate consideration, with-awn by their sponsors, or referred to the E.C. without any expression of the opinion delegates upon them. They complain, further, that, in addition to many unimportant items, the agenda was overloaded with amendments differing only in minor points of detail, most of which could have been resolved by preliminary discussion among their sponsors; that, in its concentration upon domestic matters, Conference ignored many major problems confronting local government and the service upon which it is both the right and duty of NALGO to formulate an opinion; that it neglected the opportunity so great an assembly offered of obtaining publicity for the opinions of the service on subjects of importance to it and to the nation: and that, in the words of one critic, in its concern with immediate advantage, it showed "short-sighted self interest," an absence of idealism, and the want of an "objective and forward-looking policy."

HOW WOULD YOU DO IT?
Prize Competition

This article suggests a number of reforms calculated to make NALGO Conferences more efficient, successful, and interesting. We offer two prizes, of three guineas and two guineas respectively, to the readers submitting the best suggestions to the same purpose, supported by reasoned argument. Entries, typed on one side of the paper only, not exceeding 1,000 words, and marked "Conference Competition" must reach the Editor, 24, Abingdon Street, Westminster, London, S.W.1, by September 1.

It may, of course, be argued that to expect anything different is to misinterpret the purpose of a NALGO Conference. It is the annual Parliament of a trade union: why, then, condemn it for behaving like a trade union and not like a publicity agency, a summer school, a debating club, or an ethical society? There is much force in this reply. To it, no doubt, the critics would answer that Conference could with advantage perform all those functions: that, by reform of its procedure, and without infringing upon its primary task, it could become an inspiration to the Association and the service as well as a goad or applauding echo to the N.E.C.

Too Many Delegates?

What reforms? As we see it, four measures are desirable. First, some means must be found of reducing the size of Conference. Already, on a membership register of 146,000, it has reached an attendance of 1,600 delegates—more than represent the millions of the T.U.C., and far too many for a deliberative assembly. And membership goes on rising.

Could we reduce it to, say, 1,000–1,200, and keep it there? The question raises many difficult problems. To reduce the number of delegates of big branches would give an undue influence to the small branches, while to reduce the number of small-branch delegates would disfranchise many. And to reduce the number of delegates at all would rob the Association of one of its most valuable means of educating its members and enabling them to see beyond the narrow confines of the branch. Could the problem be solved by some form of district rather than branch representation, combined with a rule that no individual may attend more than, say, three Conferences in succession?

Secondly, we must produce a more balanced agenda. One of the causes of difficulty today is the fact that Conference must discuss the Annual Report of the N.E.C. item by item and page by page, taking all notices of motion and amendments arising out of the report in the order it sets—with the result that major topics are separated by deserts of irrelevant trivia, and matters not referable to the Annual Report must jostle at the tail of the queue to take their chance in the last crowded and weary hours. This year, consideration of the Annual Report was not concluded until lunch-time on the third day, leaving only two and a half hours for consideration of the 52 miscellaneous motions and amendments of rules, apart from the T.U.C. debate which had been taken out of its context in the agenda to guarantee it a place. Would it not be better to allocate, say, one and a half hours out of each day's proceedings to the discussion of these "miscellaneous" items, which are so-called only because they cannot be fitted into the framework of the report, and which often include large slices of the "meat" of the agenda?

Eliminate the Trivial

It would not, of course, be possible to do this without also adopting our third proposed reform, namely the elimination of trivial and redundant motions and amendments. This presents the greatest difficulty—for who is to decide that a motion is trivial? Clearly not the N.E.C. since it would at once be suspect—whether rightly or wrongly is immaterial—of exercising the power of exclusion to its own advantage. The only alternative is the district committee. Would branches agree to restrict to district committees the right now enjoyed by every branch of tabling motions and amendments for the Conference agenda? Such a course might have many advantages. It would ensure that every motion and amendment, before reaching the agenda, had had to mount the hurdle of district committee consideration, and would thus guarantee for it a wide measure of support. It would eliminate many trivial matters. It would, presumably, assist in the building of a better co-ordinated agenda. And it would strengthen the influence of the district committee and might lead to notable improvements of its constitution and value. But would it have over-riding disadvantages? Would it mean the permanent exclusion from the agenda of all unusual, original, or revolutionary proposals, and the admission only of the "safe" and the orthodox? Would it, in effect, deprive progressive branches and members of a voice in the Association? And would it, by so doing, lead to a decline in branch interest? These again, are matters which only members themselves can determine.

Finally, as our fourth reform, we suggest that the Conference agenda committee might be given much wider powers than it now

possesses to consolidate, co-ordinate, and re-arrange the agenda. Were this to be done, it should prove possible, in conjunction with the other reforms suggested, to produce an agenda that would be much better balanced than is the present one, allowing ample time for "big" debates, spreading the interest fairly evenly over the three days, reserving the inevitable dull patches for those periods when the call of coffee, tea, or other refreshment claims even the most assiduous of listeners, and, ensuring that, if any "racing" is necessary, it shall take place among those unimportant items the loss or summary treatment of which would cause the least hardship.

These are preliminary and tentative suggestions only, and we invite delegates, of both this and previous years, and other members, to comment on them and to submit their alternatives. Constructive criticism is always helpful, and if it discloses a sufficient volume of agreement it may be possible to experiment with some at least of the suggestions made at Bournemouth next year.

The Promotion Examination

AT last, the Local Government Examinations Board has completed the first task entrusted to it by the National Joint Council and drawn up the syllabus and regulations of the Promotion Examination. These are summarised on another page. The first examination is to be held in May, 1948. Thereafter, and subject to any exceptions which the National Joint Council may approve, passing of this examination, or of one of the recognised technical and professional examinations (a list of which the Examinations Board is now preparing) is to be the only passport from the General Division to the higher ranges of the service.

First reactions at Conference, based on the brief outline then available, were that the examination would be too stiff. More careful consideration of the syllabus and of the purpose of the examination will, we believe, discount this view. The standard has been stated to be that of a principal subject in the higher school certificate. Is this too high—bearing in mind that every new entrant to the service is now expected to have school certificate? To those who entered the service without school certificate, it may appear so. On the other hand, we are assured that, throughout their deliberations, the Examinations Board and its examinations committee have borne in mind that the examination is no more than a qualification for promotion from the General Division, with its maximum of £300 a year. There is no competitive element and the examination should be within the capabilities of any reasonably intelligent officer. Anything less than the standard it has set would be of little value. But if it should prove high, then the answer, surely, is to increase the value set on it by raising the maximum of the General Division, not to weaken the promotion test.

More cogent, in our view, are the arguments of those who contend that it would be unfair to require officers now over 30, most of whom have long service (including, for many, several years in the Forces) and family commitments, to sit for an examination of this type: and Conference agreed to press for the exemption of those with 15 years' service or aged 35 on April 1, 1946.

The requirement that each candidate must have three years' local government experience is a wise one, and, practically speaking, means that the young entrant will do his national service before sitting for the examination. The Forces are making provision for individual education during national service, and it is hoped that some means will be found of including in this scheme the Promotion Examination which can be taken at any time after the three years' local government service has been completed.

Wise entrants will take it as soon as they can, between the ages of 22 and 25, while study still comes easily to them and before they have embarked on the distractions of family life.

A Practical Tip

The syllabus gives the candidate plenty of scope and a choice of subjects. No one will quarrel with the inclusion of English as a compulsory subject, and local and central government are, of course, essential. A background subject from the third group and a departmental subject from the fourth; or a second background subject, complete the examination.

There are no short cuts to success in the examination, but a study of the syllabus suggests one combination of subjects which may be easier than most. Any study course for local and central government section must cover in outline most of the subjects in Group IV, and must deal in some detail with two of them—Local Government Finance and Administration of Local Authorities. Thus the student who selects Elements of English Law from Group III should be able to take either of the above-mentioned papers in Group IV without further study.

It is the aim of "Local Government Service" to encourage the fullest freedom of opinion and expression within the Association. Unless a fact is expressly stated, therefore, views put forward in this journal—whether in the editorial columns or in signed articles — should not necessarily be regarded as expressing the considered policy of the Association.

CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE

Conference dealt with 99 motions and 132 amendments. Of the motions, 37 were carried, 19 rejected, 15 withdrawn, and 28 referred to the N.E.C.: of the amendments, 22 were carried, 30 rejected, four fell in consequence of a previous decision, 35 were withdrawn, and 41 were referred to the N.E.C. The more important decisions of Conference are summarised below. Numbers in brackets indicate the pages of the journal upon which the decision is reported:

It Instructed the N.E.C. to:

★ Investigate the possibility of NALGO affiliation to the T.U.C. on an industrial and non-political basis (373-4);

★ Do all possible to establish the Charter as a minimum, upon which local improvements may be made (366);

★ Press for a higher bonus, consolidated with salary (365); rates of pay at least equal to those of banks and insurance companies (368); more equitable grading (368-9); special grades for typists, shorthand typists, machine operators, and supervisors (368); and retrospective abolition of the "carry-over" (368);

★ Seek a "no detriment" clause in the Charter (366);

★ Secure "weighting" of Charter scales for large provincial cities (369);

★ Urge abolition of the promotion examination for all with 15 years' service or aged 35 on April 1, 1946 (370);

★ Press at once for equal pay for equal work, together with higher family allowances, to include the first child (372);

★ Try to form an electricity supply Whitley Council, first for "company" electricity staffs only, later to cover all staffs (376);

★ Demand that staff of Central Electricity and Area Boards be recruited from local government or electricity supply industry officers (375);

★ Continue to press for satisfactory provision for the transfer, compensation, or absorption of public assistance staffs (374);

★ Recruit voluntary hospital staffs and seek the application of the Charter to them(377);

★ Seek legislation to provide a pension for the widow or dependant of an officer (375);

★ Ask the Ministry of Education to include civics in the school curriculum (374);

It Referred to the N.E.C.:

★ A host of suggested improvements to the Charter, including Saturday morning leave, financial recognition of examination successes, appointment and promotion, abolition of annual reports, longer holidays, higher and more widespread overtime pay, car allowances, restriction of testimonials, staff welfare and canteens, and speed-up of Whitley machinery (370);

★ Amendment of the Charter sickness scheme to provide allowances for officers not covered by Workmen's Compensation during incapacity from injury or accident at work (377);

★ The desirability of general removal of the "marriage bar" (372);

★ Suggestions that it should seek a statutory right of consultation before a Government department issues regulations governing the conditions of appointment and service of local government officers (376);

★ The desirability of changing the name of the Association now that its membership extends beyond the local government service (378);

It Refused to:

★ Ask the Government to formulate a wages policy(361); increasegrants to local authorities (376); and make up civil pay of officers called up for military training (371);

★ Press for a five-day working week (369);

★ Require the N.E.C. to consult branches when formulating policy (375);

★ Elect the N.E.C. for two years, instead of one (377);

★ Require the N.E.C. to co-opt specialists to assist it in negotiation on specialist problems (377).

★ Arrange direct representation on the N.E.C. for urban and rural district branches (377);

★ Revise Association subscriptions (377);

★ Allow a branch to affiliate to a local trades council (376);

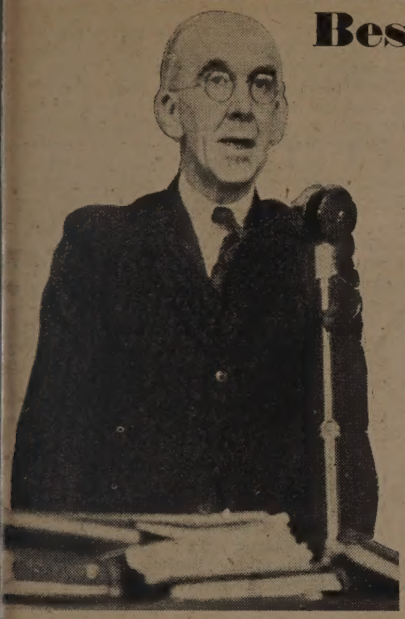
★ Provide nursing homes for retired members (362);

★ Make grants to enable large branches to pay for secretarial work (362);

★ Disregard family allowances in awarding Benevolent Fund grants (375);

★ Consider the production by NALGO of an educational film on local government (374).

'At 4s. a Week Local Government is Britain's Best Bargain"—President's Claim



"We hear a good deal about the 'burden' of the rates," declared the President, D. J. PARRY, M.A., B.Sc., *in his address to Conference, "but how many trouble to compare the increase in its cost with increases in the costs of other goods they buy? The average ratepayer gets the whole of his local government services for about four shillings per household per week—the best bargain he can get today."*

ON glancing back through the presidential addresses of my predecessors this chair, said Mr. Parry, I find the same frain repeated again and again—the frain of progress and continuous achievement. In 1938, we celebrated the achievement of compulsory superannuation—the lmination of thirty years of struggle. 1942, we rejoiced over the completion the national net-work of provincial hitley councils, and the speedy and ccessful solution of most of the special oblems war had brought us. In 1944 came e rebirth of the National Whitley Council. year ago, we acclaimed the national harter. And these several triumphs were erely the successive high-water marks in a ady and unbroken flood of achievement every branch of our work.

This year, my refrain must be the same. ie annual report which you will be conidering today, tells its own story of strength creased, ground gained, problems solved, fficulties overcome. Almost every one of e 180 paragraphs of the report records proess in one field or another of our work: in e improvement of salaries and service conitions, in the legal protection of our members, public relations, in educational developent, and in the social and protective services ovided by our ancillaries. You will be viewing them in detail and it is, therefore, necessary for me to list them here; but I ould single out three matters for special ention.

peedy Charter Adoption

The first is the really remarkable way in hich the Charter for England and Wales has en adopted. That Charter, as the Conrence agenda shows, has come in for a good al of criticism on matters of detail: but is ere any among us who would have dared to ophesy, two years or even one year ago, that today it would have been adopted by local thorities employing 99 out of every hundred cal government officers in the country, and at practically every junior entering the local vernment service today can be assured of aching the minimum salary of £7 a week at if he is a man, or of £5 10s. if she is a woman?

Never before have we secured such speedy and general adoption by local authorities of any of the national standards we have from time to time urged upon them—and the fact that it has been achieved without, as yet, invoking the sanctions of the National Arbitration Tribunal is, I suggest, an outstanding tribute to the prestige of the national and provincial councils in whose establishment we played so large a part, and to the skill with which our organising staff and the honorary officers of branches have pressed our claims upon the local authorities.

Secondly, I would single out for commendation the achievement of our Scottish colleagues in securing their parallel Charter. It is not, unhappily, an exact counterpart of the English Charter, but in the light of the greater difficulties which had to be overcome in Scotland, its successful negotiation was a real triumph upon which all concerned are to be congratulated. So far, its adoption is proceeding at a very satisfactory pace.

Biggest Problem Solved

As your National Executive Council has repeatedly emphasised, neither the English nor the Scottish Charter is to be regarded as a final document, setting forth the standards of salary and conditions of service which we regard as desirable. Far from it. Both are first attempts, hammered out in the difficult process of joint negotiation, and having all the defects of compromise between conflicting and often violently opposing views of what is needful and possible. Your leaders and negotiators are no more satisfied with them than are you, and are determined to do all in their power to improve them—although whether they will succeed in attaining to the Utopia which the Conference agenda suggests is a matter upon which I would not venture a prediction.

With all their defects, however, I do claim that, in the light of the conditions prevailing in the local government service up to a few months ago, of the great diversity of size, resources, and outlook of local authorities, and of the many national and local difficulties today, these two Charters mark a real advance of which we have every cause to be proud. With them, we have solved the biggest problem we have ever tackled, the education of some 2,000 autonomous local authorities in the virtues of collective bargaining and standardised conditions of salary and service.

My third subject of gratification is the substantial and continuing increase in our membership, which is today growing more rapidly than ever before. Your report shows that on October 31 last, we had a total of 146,000 paid-up members. That figure was 12,000 more than a year before. It includes a growing number of the officers of public utility companies recruited as a result of the decision of last year's Conference, of whom, our records show, we now have some 7,500 from 177 companies, in our ranks.

We offer our new colleagues a hearty welcome. The eagerness with which they have joined us, and the constructive enthusiasm they are already beginning to show for the work of NALGO, have convinced us of the wisdom of the decision to invite them to join forces with us. There are many difficulties to overcome, now that we are called upon to cater for their requirements, and they cannot all be solved speedily: the reconstitution of the National Joint Council for the local government service was achieved only after three years of negotiation. We are, however, already well on the way to setting up a national joint council for the non-manual staffs in the gas industry, and are working towards a similar body for electricity staffs. So I would counsel our new public utility colleagues to be patient and not to shoot the pianist while he is tuning the piano.

In NALGO itself, I believe that the existing machinery of branch, district committee, N.E.C. and Conference is sufficiently elastic to provide adequate representation of their special interests. But that experience alone can test, and if any doubt arises I am sure NALGO's leaders will examine the position in good time and with frank and open minds.

The figure of 146,000 members in the annual report does not include the many members from the local government service recruited by branches since October. How many there will be we shall not know until the end of the year, but there are indications that the increase will be substantial.

We do know that we passed 150,000 some months ago; and the circulation figures of "Local Government Service", now 171,000 and increasing at the rate of about 3,000 monthly, suggest that the final total will break all records. For that, a warm tribute is due to the honorary officers and staff, and all others who may have had a special part in the work of recruitment.

Association's Busiest Year

Turning to the day-to-day work of the Association, the past year has undoubtedly been the busiest we have ever known. Indeed, I doubt whether any individual member appreciates the volume and variety of the work now being handled by branch officers, the district staff, and Headquarters. You may perhaps form some idea of it when I tell you that, for each meeting of the N.E.C. today, every member receives agenda papers and other documents weighing some 3½ pounds and containing about 180,000 words—equivalent to, though possibly less entertaining than, three modern novels: that a recent agenda for the service conditions committee contained no fewer than 99 items and ten appendices; that the legal department in the past 12 months has scrutinised and made representations upon, or drafted amendments to, 154 parliamentary bills and provisional orders; that in an ordinary week, Headquarters receives 8,000 letters and sends out 10,000; and that every working day, district officers, on the average, visit ten branches, attend four branch meetings, take part in a deputation to a local authority, and attend a meeting of a provincial council or one of its committees. While it has been faced with this greatly increased burden of work—which has grown in complication no less than in volume—Headquarters has been faced for a variety of reasons with acute difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff of the requisite quality. It will surprise you to learn that nearly half of our present staff of 230 has been with us for less than twelve months. It

is astonishing not that you may occasionally encounter delays in your dealings with Headquarters, but that your problems—some of them far from simple—are in fact dealt with so expeditiously and successfully.

The activities of the law and parliamentary committee have reflected the legislative pressure in Parliament itself. Never in its history has the legal department had to deal with such a volume of legislation affecting local government officers—a volume amounting, in a single year, to as much as we expected to cope with in six years before the war.

This work, as every lawyer knows, is complex and exacting and, while we have not always obtained full satisfaction, it does, I suggest, represent on the whole a remarkable achievement in the protection of the interests of the local government officer. There is no sign of the flood abating. With unity and patient effort we shall be as successful in the future as in the past.

Educational Advance

As was expected, the Charter has given a great stimulus to our educational work, and this has now gone well beyond its pre-war level. The Correspondence Institute is now accepting new students at the rate of 20 a week, and is coaching a total of 2,000—30 per cent. more than the record figure reached in 1939. The Association's educational policy needs to be entirely recast in the light of the educational provisions of the Charter; the wide range of matters involved is under close survey, and you can be sure that your leaders fully appreciate the high place which the Association's educational policy must take among its major objectives.

Our public relations work, too, continues its fine progress, and is today winning the support of local authorities to a greater extent than ever before. Largely, I am sure, as a result of our pioneer efforts, more and more local authorities are being converted to its value and are setting up public relations departments and appointing public relations officers: while, at the same time, more branches and district committees are taking up the work, some with remarkable enthusiasm and success. It can attain its full influence only when every individual officer is imbued with those principles of service, courtesy, and efficiency which form its foundation stones, and I therefore appeal to all of you to act as propagandists and practitioners of public relations in your branches and among your colleagues.

Flourishing Ancillaries

Our ancillaries all flourish to an extent that few of us would have believed possible had we been able, in 1939, to foresee the countless difficulties they have had to face in the intervening years. Both our holiday centres are now open again and fully booked up for the whole of the season. We have resumed—to the gratification of large numbers of members—the continental holidays we organised before the war. The Building Society, insurances, and Approved Society are finding the ever-rising calls on their services a positive embarrassment in these days of staff shortage and restrictions of many kinds. The Benevolent Fund in ever more generous measure maintains its beneficent activities.

But of all our ancillary activities, one appeals to me especially, since I was privileged to open it less than a year ago. That is our national War Memorial, Knole Lodge Convalescent Home, Bournemouth. Since its opening, some 550 NALGO members or their wives have sought refreshment and re-creation of mind and body within its walls and, if one may judge from the many appreciative letters received at Headquarters, most have found those elusive qualities in full measure. We have every right to be proud of our home.

A year ago, my predecessor, Mr. Harrod, launched an appeal for £40,000 for the purchase and equipment of Knole Lodge, pointing out that were every branch to raise only six shillings per member that sum would be found. Since then, more than 80 branches have reached their target and some, as you will have seen in LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE, have exceeded it by handsome margins. I am sure we all warmly commend their enthusiasm and the hard work of their collectors. But others have not been so prompt, and, up to date, 392 branches have sent us no contribution. May I make a special appeal to them to make their collections and let us have the money quickly?

We ask from each branch a sum equal to six shillings per member. Unless we get it, we shall not reach the target figure. The amount for each one of you is very small—less than the price of two packets of cigarettes for those of you who still smoke them, and much less than those of you who have given up smoking are saving every week as a result!

Our Association, then, is flourishing as never before in every branch of its manifold activities. What of the great local government service to which we are so proud to belong? Of that, I think we may claim that it is tackling the tremendous problems of transition from war to peace with unexampled enterprise, enthusiasm, and ability. We hear a good deal today about rising rates and the "burden" of local government expenditure. But how many of those who complain of this "burden," I wonder, trouble to compare the increase in its cost with increases in the costs of other goods they buy, and to calculate what they get in return.

Last year, the Government has told us, the aggregate income of the people of Britain was £8,444,000,000, an increase of 74 per cent above the figure for 1938, and personal expenditure on goods and services totalled £6,584,000,000, an increase of 55 per cent above the figure for 1938. But in the same period, the amount collected in rates increased by only 22 per cent. to £259,000,000—considerably less than half the amount we spend on beer and spirits, less than half what we spent on tobacco, and not a great deal more than we spent on entertainment.

Dividends Beyond Price

The average ratepayer, indeed, gets the whole of his local government services for about four shillings per household per week.

Free education for his children, up to the University if they need it, costs him about 1s. 6d. a week—as much as he spends on newspapers.

In a week, the whole of the health service costs him about 1s. 2d.—less than a bottle of aspirins.

He has free use of all the books in all the libraries of the country for the price of a single daily paper.

His house refuse is disposed of for the price of half a bar of soap; he buys his public parks for the price of a single cigarette he may smoke there; his streets are lit at the cost of two flints for his lighter.

Can anyone fairly describe that as a burden? On the contrary, I would say that local government gives the people of Britain the best bargain they can get anywhere today—a bargain which is not only cheap at the price but which offers rich dividends in health and happiness beyond all price. This year we are celebrating the centenary of our health services; exactly 100 years ago the first medical officer of health in the world started his work in Liverpool. In the year of his appointment two out of every five persons in Liverpool contracted some infectious disease—cholera, typhus, smallpox, or scarlet fever—and in one part of the city one in every three died. In the hundred years since then, most of these diseases have been wiped out, the expectation of life has been nearly trebled—from 20 years to 55 years—and the infant mortality rate has been cut to one-quarter of what it was. Is it "burden" to pay twopence a day for the services that have made that achievement possible?

Big Changes on the Way

Today, local government keeps the nation healthy. It has brought us through the greatest war in history without a single major epidemic and with a death rate lower today than it was in 1939. It has—notwithstanding unexampled difficulties and shortages of labour and materials—built 40,000 permanent houses and 107,000 temporary houses, and repaired a further 117,000 war-damaged houses which were uninhabitable at the end of the war. With plans completed for 700,000 new houses it has far outstripped the supply of materials and the capacity of the building industry. It is restoring to peace-time pitch all its other services.

No, we have nothing to be ashamed of in our local government service. But, in taking legitimate pride in it, we do not mean that it is incapable of improvement. Great changes are inevitable, and already there are hints that they are on the way, perhaps sooner than many of us have thought in the past.

Whatever changes may come, I am certain of one thing—the local government service will be equal to them. Tested by the strain of war and peace alike, enthused with the spirit of service and devotion to the commonweal, fired with determination to answer every call, it will continue its civilising service for as long as mankind retains a civilisation to serve.

SYLLABUS OF PROMOTION EXAMINATION

THE first promotion examination of the Local Government Examinations Board, will be held in May next year. After that date (and apart from any exemptions which may be granted) only officers who pass the examination, or an equivalent approved by the Board, will qualify for promotion from the General Division. The syllabus consists of five three-hour papers divided into four groups as follows:

Group I—*English.*

Group II—*Local and central government (two papers.)*

Group III—selected from: *elements of economics; elements of statistics; elements of English law; social and political theory; comparative political institutions; social and political history since 1830; and regional and physical geography.*

Group IV—chosen either from Group III subjects or from: *local government finance; local authority administration; public health; education; public utilities and trading services; housing and estate management; town and country planning; public works; social welfare; or any other approved subject appropriate to the work of a local authority, providing application for approval is submitted to the Board by September 1 with details of the proposed course of study.*

The first paper examines an officer's ability to write clear English. The two on local and central government test his mental ability as well as his knowledge of the institutional background to his work. The fourth gives him a choice of subjects enabling him to widen his interests and knowledge beyond his own particular task. The fifth has a more direct bearing on his work but will not become a mere test of memory or overoccupy itself with day-to-day practice.

All five papers must be taken at the same time and results in the examination as a whole will determine awards.

Candidates must have had not less than three years' service on the staff of a local or other approved public authority and must be in the service of such an authority at the date of entry for the examination. Service in the Forces may be reckoned for this purpose.

The fee for entry to the examination is £2 2s. The syllabus may be obtained from the Secretary, Local Government Examinations Board, 37, Upper Grosvenor Street, London, W.1, price 6d. each, post free.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1947

N.E.C. to Examine "Non-Political" T.U.C. Affiliation

Move to Establish the Charter as a Minimum

Consolidation—if the Bonus is Increased First

SOUTHPORT gleamed and sparkled in the clear morning sunshine as delegates streamed across the promenade to the Floral Hall for the opening of Conference early on Tuesday, June 10. On the Marine Lake outside, the first yacht was billowing a graceful sail into the breeze ; gardeners were furbishing the lawns and flower beds ; and on the horizon, behind a golden desert of sand, could be seen that thin blue line which knowing ones claimed to be the sea.

But it was in a hesitant, doubtful, and rather critical mood that most delegates flocked into the hall to their seats. Would the hall be big enough (the civic reception and dance the night before had raised serious doubts) ? Would they get through the agenda of 282 items—nearly three times as many as the previous year ? And would the result, if they did, add up to anything ?

The first question was soon, and agreeably, answered. Against all appearances, the hall was big enough, even for the record gathering of 1,600, and the microphones worked with almost unfailing clarity, so that all heard, if not all saw, every speaker. Conference did get through the agenda—but only by referring 55 motions and amendments calling for improvements in the Charter to the N.E.C. en bloc, referring a further 14 to the Council separately, often also without debate, and allowing 50 to be withdrawn. In fact, of the 231 motions and amendments on the agenda, only 108 were put to the vote, and of those 49 were rejected, leaving only 37 motions and 22 amendments which were adopted.

HEADACHES FOR N.E.C.
Far-Reaching Demands

Did those take us any further ? On that, opinion must be divided, but most delegates, one fancies, were disappointed. After a sham fight, the Association is a stage nearer to affiliation to the T.U.C., and the general opinion seemed to be that it would go in next year, on its own terms. The N.E.C. has been left with some acute headaches—notably instructions to establish the Charter as a minimum rather than as a standard and to secure the inclusion in it of a " no-detriment " clause ; to demand retrospective abolition of the " carry-over " under which, in many cases, payment of higher salaries under the Charter has been spread over two years ; and to secure exemption from the promotion examination for all officers who had 15 years' service or had reached 35 by April 1, 1946. Conference allowed the N.E.C. to proceed with the negotiations for consolidation of salaries and bonus—but only on condition that the rates agreed show a " considerable increase " on present salaries plus bonus. In addition, the N.E.C. must press for higher scales for juniors, typists, machine operators, and supervisors, must aim at salaries generally at least as high as those paid by banks and insurance companies, must take action to secure more uniform grading, and must seek a salary " weighting " for all large cities.

For the rest, Conference referred a host of similar claims to the N.E.C., reaffirmed long-standing policy in respect of such matters as equal pay, Whitley machinery for nationalised services, and civics in schools, made the usual addition to the list of hoped-for improvements to the Superannuation Acts, altered a few rules —and provided the opportunity for 1600 branch and district officers to dance, play, and talk together. Many may consider the last mentioned was its most useful, as it was certainly its most enjoyable, function. But that the future alone can determine. Meantime, the agenda.

MAYOR'S WELCOME
55 Years in Local Government

Opening Conference, the Mayor, ALD. J. PEET, confessed that, of the many gatherings he had to welcome to Southport, it gave him particular pleasure to welcome NALGO. For he had himself served his local authority for over 54 years—as a workman, as an officer, and as a councillor—and, nearly a quarter of a century ago, he had attended its Conference as chairman of the Southport branch executive (cheers). The agenda demonstrated how great had been NALGO's progress since then—that and the size of Conference, for Southport, told first that there would be 1,150 delegates, had found itself having to accommodate over 1,600. He bade them welcome, hoped they would make the most of the town's amenities, and invited them to the Southport Flower Show in August.

The President having thanked the Mayor, R. T. SHEARS (Chairman, B. & O. Fund Committee), invited the Mayoress to present the trophies and diplomas awarded to branches making the best contributions to the Benevolent and Orphan Fund. That Fund, Mr. Shears believed, was a model of its kind. Since it was started in 1910, members had contributed £283,000 for the relief of their less fortunate colleagues and their dependants. The song in the heart of the Chancellor of the Exchequer when reviewing the nation's finances was a mere twitter compared with the exultation in NALGO when, year after year, it was seen how generously members supported it. Last year, for example, although they contributed over £15,000 to the War Memorial Fund, their subscriptions to the B. & O. Fund had increased to £18,565, and were the highest on record (cheers).

North-East Wins B. & O. Shield

The Mayoress then presented the trophies and diplomas as follows :

TROPHIES

(Awarded to districts with the highest contribution per head)

1. SIR HOMEWOOD CRAWFORD Shield—**North Eastern** (£1,910, an average of 5s. 2½d. per member).
2. VISCOUNT WAKEFIELD Shield—**Eastern** (£1,673, an average of 4s. 9d. per member).
3. "BRIDLINGTON" Cup—**South Wales** (£1,464, an average of 4s. 5½d. per member).

DIPLOMAS OF MERIT

(Awarded to branches whose aggregate contributions have reached £1,000)

Brentford and Chiswick	£1,027	**Keighley**	£1,061
Bromley	£1,039	**Lewisham**	£1,076
Colchester	£1,090	**Leyton**	£1,024
Folkestone	£1,002	**Luton**	£1,043
Fulham	£1,009	**Paddington**	£1,029
		York	£1,024

After MISS E. DAWSON had thanked the Mayoress and had presented her with a bouquet of roses, Mr. Shears announced the contributions from other districts :

District	*Total*	*Members*	*Per Head*
Southern	£1,438	6,544	4s. 5d.
South-Eastern	£1,882	8,787	4s. 3½d.
East Midland	£1,982	9,396	4s. 2½d.
North-Western	£5,410	25,849	4s. 2d.
Metropolitan	£5,142	25,412	4s. 0½d.
South-Western	£1,516	8,315	3s. 8d.
Yorkshire	£2,805	15,308	3s. 8d.
Scottish	£1,930	11,446	3s. 4½d.
West Midland	£2,056	14,043	2s. 11d.
Total	£29,208	146,057	4s. 0d.

Branches which had passed a further £1,000 mark during the year were :

Bermondsey	£2,202	**Newport, Mon.**	£2,022
Bootle	£2,043	**Norwich**	£2,011
Bradford	£3,085	**Oldham**	£2,019
Cardiff	£4,010	**P.L.A.**	£2,145
Glamorganshire	£5,050	**Rotherham**	£2,105
Hammersmith	£2,056	**Stoke on Trent**	£6,110
Hull	£3,100	**Surrey**	£2,007
Kent	£4,011	**West Ham**	£3,080

There followed the PRESIDENT'S address, reported on another page, to which F. W. GOODCHILD, **Eastern district**, paid tribute in a vote of thanks, and the reading by the President of a telegram from Mr. JOHN EDWARDS, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, who had hoped to attend Conference but had at the last moment been prevented by illness. Conference agreed to send messages of sympathy to Mr. Edwards and also to A. A. GARRARD, President in 1944-5, who had just undergone an operation.

The results of the N.E.C. election were announced, the auditors re-elected, scrutineers appointed (to a sinecure as it turned out), and, these preliminaries concluded, delegates settled down to consideration of what, since last year, they had come to look upon as one of the high-spots of the proceedings—the honorary treasurer's financial statement.

TREASURER'S REPORT
Wisecracks at 300 w.p.m.

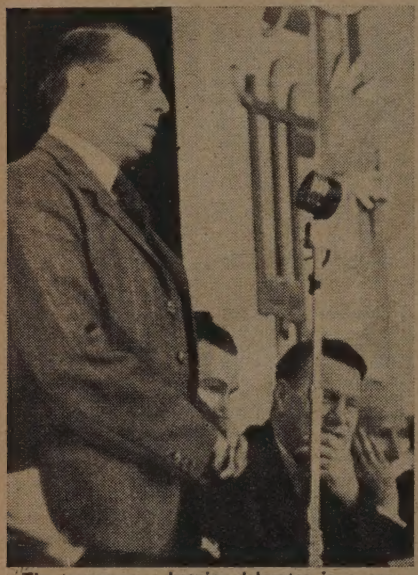
They were not disappointed. The treasurer, J. H. ROBINSON, was in excellent form, wisecracking over his accounts at the rate of 300 words and ten laughs a minute, keeping delegates in a continuous ripple of amusement while himself maintaining an expression of schoolmasterish solemnity, until one listener was overheard to comment that if only he were at the Treasury the tax-payer as well as the Chancellor might have a song in his heart.

Some delegates, attending Conference for the first time, said Mr. Robinson, might be wondering why this dismal business appeared so early in the agenda, and why it was not relegated to the end, when the accounts could be considered in the appropriate atmosphere of members running to catch their trains. The reason, he thought, was to allow delegates, after dealing with the highly contentious matter of finance, to proceed with their usual calm deliberation to such non-contentious matters as equal pay and T.U.C. affiliation (laughter), and to apply themselves with their customary vigour to their proper function of slamming the N.E.C. (laughter) : in other words, they would do the dreary work before the dirty work (laughter).

Delegates who had studied the accounts—and he was sure the majority had given them their sole and undivided attention—ever since he had come to the microphone—might think they were like the Charter : "there must be some good points somewhere if only we could find them" (laughter).

Association's £11,900 Surplus: Knole Lodge Appeal

The Benevolent and Orphan Fund account showed a fall of nearly £3,000 in total income, to £33,772—though subscriptions had increased by £1,000—but he did not think that the Fund was suffering from lack of money. It was, however, significant that some 40,000 members did not contribute to the Fund—a figure suggesting a considerable field for local activity. Outstanding expenditure items included £928 for holidays for beneficiaries, and £2,026 for birthday gifts to war orphans—which must have made a lot of children happy.



The treasurer . . keeping delegates in a continuous ripple of amusement while himself maintaining a schoolmasterish solemnity.

The Fund showed a surplus for the year of some £4,068, bringing its total surplus to about £127,000, all of which, apart from the special loan to the General Fund, was well invested.

Dealing with the General Fund account, Mr. Robinson recalled that, last year, he had described income from members' subscriptions as the life-blood of the Association. Since then, there had been some useful blood-transfusion by branch officers, for this year that income had risen from £100,000 to £158,000, equivalent to an average of 21s. 8d. per head this year compared with 15s. last. That was due partly to the increase in subscriptions agreed in 1945, and partly to an increase of nearly 12,000 members. Branches got their cut out of it, and their income had gone up to £56,000—from 5s. 3d. to 7s. 8d. per head—leaving £102,000 for the "just and proper purposes" of the Association.

Administration expenses charged to other accounts had gone up from £40,000 to £51,000—as a result of increased salaries under the Charter and an increased establishment—and many other expenses, such as printing and stationery, special meetings, district organisation, and Whitley Councils, had all increased.

Touching on the Association's education work, the treasurer interjected a plea for the "unqualified man." In general, he thought, it was an advantage for a young man to get academic qualifications. Even if it did not get him a "top job"—which depended on a good deal of luck—it did enable him to go so far up the ladder and to approach his work with more interest and intelligence than if he were working in the dark. But there were many in the late thirties and early forties who had no academic qualifications but who, given a little experience, could do a better job well (hear ! hear !). He hoped, therefore, that those "running things" would not entirely despise experience gained in the service and would not compel people like himself, who were called on to recommend promotion, to pass over a good man simply because he had not got a piece of paper (cheers).

The net cost of publishing LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE had increased from £7,000 to £8,900. Last year there had been some criticism of the journal, but he personally thought it an excellent paper. Unlike many specialist papers which catered for the intellectual few—"such as we are"—as distinct from the unintelligent mass, it was readable (hear ! hear !). It could be read with profit and advantage even by that particular form of low life which, he gathered, was responsible for the past, present, and future ills of NALGO—the chief officers (laughter). It had humour—those little snippets in the middle page with sometimes a Rabelaisian flavour much appreciated by local government officers—and it had its serious side—the editorial matter—which, he understood, did not reflect the considered policy of the Association (laughter). Equally serious, and far more sacred, were the letters from correspondents, from which he gathered that they were of the opinion that the Association never had and never would have a considered policy on anything whatsoever (laughter). The journal provided good value for money, and the Association might be proud of it.

Reserve Fund Increasing

The Revenue account showed a surplus of about £11,900, compared with a deficit of £7,000 last year. That change was principally due to one factor—the increase in subscriptions.

A year ago, he had said that the test of the prosperity and strength of an association like NALGO was the adequacy and liquidity of its reserves. The balance sheet then before them showed that, last December, liabilities exceeded income by £2,000, with no floating assets to meet them, and a liquidity rate of "nil."

Since then, however, the position had changed. The sale of the Abingdon-street offices would mean that at least the book-value of the premises, £30,300, would be received and the Reserve increased by a like amount. If to that could be added the further money it was hoped to raise to buy Knole Lodge as the War Memorial, they would have about £66,000 in cash and investments. The Reserve Fund would then stand at about £106,000, with a liquidity ratio of about 40 per cent.

At a time when the local government service was going through a transitional stage and none could foresee the future as it affected NALGO, it was of value to have some financial freedom which would make it possible to mark time and meet whatever the future brought, coolly, calmly, and deliberately. He thought the position was likely to be very much better next year, when they would be feeling the effect of the Charter. But Conference must not assume that there was money for the asking, and there was still need for economy. Membership had to be maintained, and it was a matter for every individual member to maintain and, if possible, increase that membership.

Conference warmly acclaimed this speech and adopted the accounts unanimously, whereupon W. P. GILLIGAN, **South-Western District,** as treasurer of a district whose accounts were insolvent, moved an envious vote of thanks to a man who, in twelve months, could convert a deficiency of £7,000 into a surplus of £12,000.

KNOLE LODGE CHARGES

"Too High for Lower Grades"

Next, E. A. S. YOUNG **(N.E.C. Chairman)** formally presented the Annual Report, taking the unusual step of drawing the attention of Conference to one section in particular—the report of the Law and Parliamentary committee. Although the least publicised, this was among the most important work the Association did and he felt that Conference would wish to pay tribute to the honorary solicitors, the members of the committee, and the officers concerned for their really splendid work on behalf of members.

Conference, which had by now been in session for exactly two hours, proceeded to the notices of motion arising out of the Annual Report, starting with that from the **London and Home Counties Joint Electricity Authority** branch calling for reduced charges at Knole Lodge for officers in the lower grades.

Moving this, J. D. S. MOUNTFORD, said that four guineas a week, while not excessive for officers in higher grades, was too much for those getting only General Division salaries. It was no answer to say that NALGO would make exceptions in extenuating circumstances, since few would admit to distress so long as they had two coins to rub together. His suggestion was increase the charge for those in the higher grad so that it might be reduced for those in the lowe

H. BRAMWELL, **North-Eastern District,** move an amendment to extend the proposed reductio to members of the Benevolent and Orphan Fun Notwithstanding the fine words used at th opening of the home, he declared, the Associatio by fixing the charges it had, had virtually close it to many members urgently needing co valescent treatment. Recently, for the first tim in his secretaryship of the Newcastle-on-Tyn branch, he had felt ashamed—when he had to te four members, each with a doctor's certifica recommending convalescent home treatmen and each wanting to pay without an appeal t the B. & O. Fund, but each married and in th General Division, that a fortnight in the Associa tion's convalescent home would cost them at lea £14 apiece. Each of those men had to go t another convalescent home, run at much les cost. Since some of the hotels advertised in th NALGO Holiday Guide charged no mor and sometimes less, it was reasonable to assum that Knole Lodge was being run uneconomicall or for profit (cries of "No !").

F. JOHNSON, **N.E. District,** seconding th amendment, pointed out that the home had n yet been filled to capacity: a reduction in th charges would enable members in the North t use it more freely, and would thus reduce ove head costs, making a charge of £3 3s. 0 adequate.

£7,000 Deficit in Nine Months!

G. LLEWELYN, N.E.C., reluctantly oppose both motion and amendment. They wante Knole Lodge to be self-supporting, he explaine yet the first nine-months' working had shown deficit of £7,000. The charge of £4 4s. 0d. wa lower than the actual cost per head—whic worked out at £5 10s. 1d. for a single perso last year—and he thought that all who had staye there would regard it as reasonable. In an event, the N.E.C. was still feeling its way, and was too soon to reduce charges. Younge members should join the Provident Society, whic would entitle them to free admission; while n member should hesitate to ask for assistanc from the B. & O. Fund if he needed it. That wa what it was there for—and it had helped man to stay at Knole Lodge in the past twelve month For these reasons, he appealed to Conference t leave charges as they were for the presen Conference agreed, rejecting both motion an amendment.

This gave F. H. HARROD, **immediate pas president,** the cue for another appeal for th £40,000 war memorial fund which he had launche a year before. The result of that first appeal, h said, had been disappointing, (hear ! hear !) an reflected on the Association. It was the obliga tion of all to see that some tangible memorial wa set up to those who had lost their lives in the wa and when it was considered that members had bee asked only for a shilling a month for six months he could not imagine why every member had no already paid that and cleared his conscience.

He appealed to delegates to go back to thei branches and try to get that shilling a month fo six months—and more. If they got £80,00 instead of the £40,000 asked for, they could endow the home, and solve the problem of charge for the lower-paid members (cheers). Let then be able to say, at next year's Conference, tha Knole Lodge would offer accommodation an help to every member, whether he could affor it or not (cheers).

The PRESIDENT, supporting this appeal, tol Conference that **Liverpool** branch had sent a cheque for 1,000 guineas (cheers).

East Ham branch next called on the N.E.C. fo a comprehensive statement defining the aims an objects of the recruitment of public utility officers the limits within which existing company staff du to be absorbed by the new authorities would b recruited, and the effect of this recruitment on th membership of local government officers.

Moving this, W. A. ADKINS disclaimed an desire to censure the N.E.C. for its entry into th utility field; rather was it to be congratulated or this move to safeguard the interests of loca government officers likely to be transferred, and t encourage the recruitment of existing company staffs. But his branch felt it was time member were told what was the N.E.C.'s long-term policy, how NALGO's machinery must be altered to meet the new conditions, and what were the limits

National Wages Policy Sought To End Pay Scramble

f recruitment of public utility staffs. A year go, Mr. Riley had envisaged a potential member-hip of 250,000 utility officers. If that goal were eached, the policy of the Association would have o change in many respects, and his branch anted to know the N.E.C.'s ideas and plans. A efinition of the limits within which it was pro-osed to recruit existing "company" staffs was mportant, since, while "officer status" was fairly ell defined in local government, it might not be o clearly laid down for company staffs, and, if ey were not careful, they might create anomalies. ecruiting as company officers holders of posts hich were excluded in local government.

ectional Groups Possible

And what would be the effect on those remain-ng in local government service? They were to se their electricity, transport, gas, and a large roportion of their public health members. All ese members could remain in NALGO, but eir outlook and problems would change and ey would have little in common with their old anches. If the public services, including both ility and local government, were to be regional-ed, must not NALGO follow the same ourse? If it did, its activities would have to over all forms of public service employment, nd the future set-up might have to include ectional organisations within the parent body.

M. E. FITCH, **East Ham,** seconding, reminded onference that when Poor Law was transferred o county boroughs in 1930, those who sought dmission to NALGO because they were lassed as officers included gate-keepers, porters, nd male servants. It was to avoid such difficul-ics again that they now urged a definite policy.

C. BARON, **Northmet,** intervened to assure the ponsors of the motion that the division between fficers and servants was as clearly defined in the ompany as in the municipal field.

E. L. RILEY, late **chairman, National Joint ouncil, staff side,** accepted the motion on behalf f the N.E.C. They had expected it, he said, ey would consider it at their next meeting, and ey would produce the desired statement within e year. Branches were to be urged to speed up ecruitment of public utility staffs, since, when e new joint negotiating bodies were set up, NALGO's claim to representation would epend on its membership. Conference there-pon approved the motion.

LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEES

Call for National Campaign

H. HILDER, **Bethnal Green,** moved the reference ack, as unsatisfactory, of Paragraph 13 of the nnual Report, dealing with the establishment of ocal joint committees. A year ago, he said, onference had instructed the N.E.C. to initiate campaign for the establishment of local joint ommittees throughout the service. But all the .E.C. had done was to refer to the Charter, in hich the National Joint Council asked local uthorities to establish such committees, to ention the model constitution for a local joint ommittee approved by the N.J.C. in November, 946, and to suggest that branches should now ake local action. Could that be called a cam-aign? A year ago, the N.E.C. had admitted that oint committees had been established by only 87 out of 1,530 authorities in England and Vales, and it had since reported no increase on hat figure. There had been no real attempt to et things going. Local action was essential, but t could be effective only as part of a well-defined ational campaign.

S. C. MULLET, **Bethnal Green,** seconding, sug-ested that the reference to joint committees in the reamble to the Charter had had little effect on ocal authorities: there was no indication that he National Joint Council had in fact recom-ended local authorities to establish joint ommittees.

Replying for the N.E.C., L. BEVAN, newly-ppointed leader of the staff side of the National oint Council, argued that the Council had carried ut the instructions of Conference by persuading he N.J.C. to approve a model constitution for a ocal joint committee. That was sent to all rovincial councils, with a request that they hould act on it in their areas, and after that, urther progress was a matter for branches. If hey met difficulty, the district officers would ive all possible assistance. Progress had been made and in the past 12 months the number of joint committees had increased from 287 to 379. He asked Conference to reject the motion, leaving further pressure to local action. Conference agreed.

But **Bethnal Green** had not finished, and, undeterred by this defeat, came to the microphone again to censure the N.E.C.'s delay in obtaining a better salary weighting for London in the national scales. This time MR. MULLET came first to the rostrum where, after disarmingly assuring the N.E.C. of his branch's continued loyalty, he roundly condemned it for "complete failure to appreciate the position." Twelve months after accepting a series of motions and amendments calling for higher weighting, all the Council could report was that it had had to obtain information on the cost-of-living—information which should have been available when the weighting was first negotiated—and that proposals were being prepared for submission to the N.J.C. Although the Brighton Conference was assured that the staff side of the N.J.C. "took a poor view" of the weighting secured and intended to press actively and urgently for its increase, it was not until December 18, six months after Conference, that metropolitan branches were asked for information about the expenditure of officers in the General Division. This unjustifiable delay was causing impatience and unrest among the rank and file.

The delay was more remarkable when it was realised that the employers were in agreement with the staff on the need for a higher weighting. In February, the London District Council had expressed the opinion that conditions in metropolitan boroughs were very different from those in the rest of the country, and asked the N.J.C. immediately to consider a revision of the salary scales in respect of those boroughs. Upon the success of the claims for London officers would depend the weighting—which he supported to the utmost—for those working in the large provincial cities, and he therefore called for the united support of Conference.

A. J. EAGLES, **Southwark,** supporting as a representative of the branch moving the principal motion a year ago, said that the N.E.C. had then given an assurance that the claim would be speedily dealt with; in fact, it had delayed so long that now London weighting was being considered in conjunction with the cost-of-living bonus and salaries in a consolidated scheme, and might not be dealt with this year.

Claim Now Before N.J.C.

P. T. BAYES, **Hammersmith,** asked whether the proposal to be submitted to the N.J.C. would correspond with his branch's amendment last year, calling for an equal weighting for all officers, irrespective of grade or sector.

J. PEPPER, **N.E.C.,** replying, claimed that there had been no unavoidable delay. It would have been fatal to apply for higher weighting without building up an effective case, based on up-to-date information. To get that information, the N.E.C. inquired into expenditure of officers in the metropolitan district and other parts of the country, but the result had not been helpful.

Moreover, the staff side had taken the view—which, since they knew the records and attitudes of the employees, could not be disregarded—that it would be unwise to press for increases in London weighting at the same time as they were seeking an increase in the bonus. But the application for higher weighting was before the N.J.C. now, and it had already been agreed that the weighting should apply to officers of all local authorities wholly within the metropolitan police area, and also to officers of the London, Middlesex, Essex Hertfordshire, Kent, and Surrey County Councils whose principal places of business were within that area. The answer to Mr. Bayes' question was that the staff side was calling for an equal weighting for all.

Conference rejected the motion, and, since it was now close on 12.30 p.m., adjourned for lunch.

WAGE-LEVEL CONTROL

Essentials of Policy

Resuming after the adjournment, delegates turned to the comprehensive resolution of the **Nottingham** branch, calling for a national wages policy.

"This Conference," it read, "noting the danger of inflation in the present period of acute shortage of man-power:

1. Realises that an unregulated scramble for all-round wage increases will benefit neither the country as a whole nor wage earners as a class, and that the local government service in particular is likely to fare badly in such a scramble.
2. Urges H.M. Government to formulate immediately a national policy on wages and the distribution of the national income.
3. Declares that such a policy should include the following provisions:
   (*a*) That the cost of living, based on an up-to-date index, be kept steady.
   (*b*) That inflation shall be prevented by equating purchasing power to production.
   (*c*) That wage levels shall be so adjusted that labour is attracted to those occupations which are most in the public interest.
4. Declares that the absence of such a policy on wages will lead inevitably to strong demands for substantial wage increases from the local government service."

Inflation Peril to L.G.O.s

Moving it in a good, well-reasoned, and well-delivered speech, A. WADE, branch chairman, said that the resolution had been very carefully considered and subjected to so much amendment as to have had all political flavour squeezed out of it. Inflation was today a real danger, and it would press most severely on those with fixed incomes. Already, the general level of prices had risen by 50 per cent. since 1938, and today, for every £10 worth of goods in the shops there was £11 of purchasing power in the people's pockets. At the same time, a scramble for higher wages was in progress: one section of workers would get a rise, then another section would use that rise, and the possible increase in prices, to get an increase for themselves—and so it went on. That method, with each group of workers pressing for the biggest wages they could get, would do real harm to our economic stability. Some would do much worse than others in the scramble, and he was sure that local government officers would be left behind.

"Local government officers would be left behind."

As an alternative to that unregulated scramble, the Government should formulate a policy to ensure that everyone had a fair share of the total wage bill of the country. Given commonsense and co-operation between trade unions and employers, a workable scheme could be produced. Paragraph 3 of the resolution contained three essential conditions of such a scheme—stabilisation of the cost of living, the equating of purchasing power to production, and the attraction of labour to the most essential occupations.

Wages must include salaries, and the wages policy would include salaried workers. Although the resolution did not mention hours of work, their inclusion in a wages policy was implicit.

The resolution ended with a warning, for, while they might press for a wages policy, they must preserve freedom of action until it was instituted. If others continued to demand, and get, wage increases, NALGO would be forced to push forward its claims as well. No delegate need think that, by supporting the resolution, he was weakening the hand of the N.E.C. Rather would adoption of the resolution show that NALGO was a public-spirited body, and strengthen it by obtaining the good will of the public. Once the principle of fair shares had been adopted, the position of local government

N.E.C. Considering How to Ease Branch Officers' Burde

would be maintained, because none could deny its importance. His branch accepted an amendment by the Metropolitan district to add, as a fifth paragraph, a pledge by the Association to do all in its power to improve the efficiency and productivity of local government.

F. LEBENTZ, **Walthamstow**, moved the deletion of all words after "class" in paragraph 1. His branch, he explained, generally supported the motion, regarding it as one of the most important on the agenda, but felt it a mistake to admit in advance that in a wages scramble the local government service might suffer more than other sections of wage-earners. That might have been true in the past, but if the threat came again they should not be defeatist, but show that NALGO could resist all attacks.

After the **L.C.C.** branch had withdrawn its amendment confining the motion to a simple recommendation for a national wages policy, H. S. BAILEY, **Manchester**, opposed both motion and amendment. It was a grand thing for NALGO to set an example in a matter of that kind, he agreed, but they had to remember that the N.E.C. was engaging in greatly delayed negotiations for a belated cost-of-living bonus. Would the N.E.C. give an assurance that the passing of the resolution would not affect those negotiations? Without that assurance, they were in grave danger of burning their boats.

W. BUCHANAN, **Glasgow**, asked what was the use of carrying on as a national association if the Government was to fix wages and distribute the national income.

T. FERNLEY, **Manchester**, also opposed the motion in a speech both vigorous and well-delivered. It had, he declared, been drawn up haphazardly, and it by no means covered the whole of the economic danger to the local government officer or to the country. Notwithstanding Mr. Wade's opening disclaimer of any political implications, it involved the most pressing political problems (hear! hear!). For example, the resolution suggested that the danger of inflation arose primarily from the unregulated scramble for wage increases. But there were other factors, such as the retention of over a million men in the armed forces not engaged in productive work; and the under-employment of women as a result of unequal pay.

"A Matter of High Politics"

L. H. TAYLOR, **N.E.C.**, pointed out that the discussion had disclosed wide divergencies of opinion, which were reflected in the N.E.C. itself. Notwithstanding Mr. Wade's claim, this was a matter of high politics, and all knew whence came the pressure for a wages policy. Whatever they thought of the desirability of such a policy NALGO should not commit itself at this stage. But that was not to say that the problem did not affect NALGO. It did, vitally—and there were ways in which they might deal with it, possibly in association with other black-coated unions, or possibly in collaboration with the T.U.C. Local Government Advisory Committee. There was wide scope for discussion, but it would be premature and unwise to reach a decision that day.

Some delegates would remember the Geddes "Axe" of 1922, and still more would remember the May Committee of 1931, both of which cut the salaries of the black-coated worker in general and the public servant in particular. The recent White Paper on the National Income had shown that between 1938 and 1946 wages had increased by 74 per cent., salaries by 51 per cent and profits and interest by 85 per cent. Did they imagine that organised labour would agree to a wages policy unless there was also a profits policy?

The motion suggested that wage levels should be adjusted to attract workers to those occupations most in the public interest. But who was going to decide what was most in the public interest? What would be the criteria? Criteria of that kind did not settle themselves. It was clear that the motion raised many difficult problems, and he therefore suggested that it and the amendments be referred to the N.E.C. which could take such action as it thought appropriate in the circumstances—which were changing from day to day. Conference should have confidence in the N.E.C. (cheers).

But S. E. SHALLICE, **Manchester**, was not satisfied. The motion was a dangerous one, and he called upon Conference not to refer it to the N.E.C., but to reject it entirely. Apparently sharing this view, Conference, having thrown out the Walthamstow amendment, did reject the motion by an overwhelming majority.

HOMES FOR AGED MEMBERS
Cost Not Justified By Demand

Then, turning, as the mover brightly remarked, from politics to rheumatics, delegates were invited by A. G. SALISBURY, **Woolwich**, to urge the N.E.C. to consider the provision of self-supporting nursing homes for aged and infirm retired members of the service, and the wives, husbands, widows, and widowers of members.

A year ago, Mr. Salisbury recalled, Conference had approved a proposal for the establishment of self-supporting guest houses for retired members but Woolwich felt that that plan did not go far enough, since it did not provide for those unable to look after themselves and needing light nursing. It was now almost impossible to find nurses to take care of old people in their homes, and it was often inconvenient for their families to look after them.

J. L. DAVISON, **South Shields**, moved the deletion of the words "self-supporting" from the motion, lest the need to make an economic charge might debar any member from enjoying the homes, the idea of which he warmly supported.

But J. H. TYRRELL, **N.E.C.**, resisted these appeals. Having gone into the matter, he said, the Council was not satisfied that the demand for such nursing homes was sufficient to justify

"Homes wanted for overworked branch secretaries"

the high cost. Old people did not like being transplanted into a new environment, and the only way to meet their wishes would be to have many small homes scattered throughout the country. The cost of maintenance of these, especially if nursing had to be provided, would be great. The Benevolent and Orphan Fund was already able to help old people who were willing to move away from their own neighbourhood. Conference saw the force of this argument, and rejected the motion, the amendment, and a further amendment by **Cornwall County** branch to make all dependent relatives of members eligible for admission to the homes.

PAID ASSISTANTS FOR BRANCHES
Strain on Honorary Officers

There followed a livelier debate on a motion tabled by the **South Wales and Monmouthshire district** and **Glamorgan branch**, directing the N.E.C. to give "early and adequate" financial assistance to large branches to enable them to carry out secretarial duties hitherto performed by honorary officers, and calling for a full report next year.

This motion was based on a paragraph in the Annual Report recording that the N.E.C., appreciating the difficulties of branches, was investigating the whole problem in relation to branch needs, financial resources, and the preservation of equity as between branch and branch. Moving the motion, W. J. HARRIS, **Glamorgan**, while approving the N.E.C.'s attitude, doubted whether it realised the urgency of the matter. NALGO's great progress in the past years had been largely dependent upon the interest and enthusiasm of members, aroused and maintained by branch honorary officers, many of whom, today, were sacrificing both leisure and official time and forgoing prospects of promoti to carry on their NALGO work.

If the Association was to continue worki successfully, it must ease the burden on t honorary officers. The only solution was pa assistants who would work under the directi of the honorary officers.

J. B. PARRY, **South Wales district**, secondin said it was no satisfaction to the man with grouse to be told that the honorary secretary the treasurer was too busy to see him. He look for service, and had a right to expect it. NALG must deliver the goods, and financial assistance branches would be a sound investment.

A. SMITH, **Sheffield**, supporting, told Conferen that, in his branch of 3,000 members they h been compelled to employ a paid secretary. T branch could find most of the money, but was st about £100 short—and that meant either he from the N.E.C. or continually frittering aw reserve funds built up over a number of yea

L. S. RICHARDSON, **Middlesex**, also supporte on behalf of a branch of nearly 2,000 membe If something were not done, he said, they wou need, not homes for the aged and infirm, b homes for branch honorary secretaries. His ow branch secretary had nearly worked himself t death. He had noticed recently that NALG had not always pressed its case as vigorous as other trade unions—and he suggested th that was because the honorary branch secreta had to think of his job first.

J. M. ANDERSON, **Scottish District**, also su porting, said that Glasgow had had to emplo a paid secretary last year. It got no assistan from the N.E.C., but was told to spend its reser fund of £3,000, built up over the past 20 yea That was wrong: branches should not be expecte to pay out reserves accumulated by economy.

C. R. SANDELL, **Pembroke and District**, o posing, as a member of a small branch, suggest that the complaints of the big branches we overdone. They were usually well-staffed author ties, whose officers had some spare time (cri of "No!" to which Mr. Sandell retorted th he had worked in large authorities as well small ones, and the proof of the pudding was the eating). Moreover, the big branches ha financial reserves and could better afford to p for assistance than the smaller branches. T medium-sized branch had far more difficulty operating than the very big one (cheers).

"Stranglehold" of Big Branches

N. G. SMITH, **Stretford**, complained that su porters of the motion were seeking to get t smaller branches to subsidise the larger ones. H own branch was in between. But as the treasur had reminded them, every branch got a sub scription rebate of so much per head of membership, and the big branch, with its 2,0 or 5,000, got 2,000 or 5,000 units. If, with th higher income, it could not pay for part-tim clerical assistance, and if out of 5,000 membe it could not find one or two, or fifty, to give son help, there was something wrong with the branc

"I suggest," Mr. Smith concluded, am cheers, "that small branches could have be better represented at this Conference, and wou have been if they had had more money. W know that little branches have had to ask f financial assistance to send one representati here—yet the bigger branches take up a who row" (cheers). He had felt for some time th the bigger branches were getting a stranglehol on the Association. If Conference passed th resolution, it would increase that stranglehold.

For the N.E.C., J. H. ROBINSON, honora treasurer, asked Conference to reject the motio Its supporters were kicking at an open doo but the debate had shown that the subject w a controversial one to be considered coolly an calmly, and not one for panic legislation. T Council was considering the problem, but opposed the motion because it asked for a blan cheque which NALGO would have to mee Paragraph 10 of the Association's rules allowe the N.E.C. to assist branches, but the rule oug not to be invoked without full consideration of th local circumstances, the form of the assistanc and where it should be given. And behind it was the problem of finance. Claims from branches only might call for £20,000 a year—an as one speaker had said, that would involve th small branches helping the big ones. He therefo asked Conference to reject the motion and allo

N.J.C. Ex-Chairman Reviews Charter Criticisms

e N.E.C. to go on with its inquiries. Delegates pproved this suggestion and rejected the motion.

At this point, Conference having reached the ng section of the agenda devoted to criticisms of, id proposals for amendments to, the Charter, . L. RILEY, until lately chairman of the N.J.C. aff side, and now newly-appointed chairman the N.E.C., sought permission to preface eir debate with a general statement. A year ago, recalled, Conference generally approved the harter and, in the main, expressed confidence in e Association's negotiators. But he had pro- nesied that, when the first general feeling of tisfaction had died down, there would be much iticism of detail. That prophecy had been borne ut and, if the agenda were taken as expressing e general feeling of branches, there appeared be very little right with the Charter (laughter).

lours and Overtime

Of Part I, dealing with recruitment and training, ere was a marked absence of criticism, and he ok it that those provisions were generally ceptable and sound. Under Part II—general onditions of service—there were claims for reduction in working hours or a five-day eek or both. The N.E.C. hoped to convince onference that the Charter hours were reasonable nd justified. There was also criticism of the vertime clause, but it had to be borne in mind at, until the introduction of the Charter, pay- ent for overtime was not general, and the egotiators therefore considered establishment the principle more important than the detail. he main fight was to win the principle—for, at once gained, its application could always be nproved.

On annual leave, dissatisfaction was general nd the staff side claim for an improvement had en energetically pursued and was again before e National Joint Council. A Conference resolu- on would fortify the N.E.C.

Subsistence allowances had caused much ifficulty, which the N.J.C. had tried to solve y interpretations. But these were not yet tisfactory, failing to meet the needs both of fficers and local authorities, and more progress y trial and error might be necessary before a tisfactory solution was found.

A special sub-committee of the N.J.C. had been iven the task of drawing up suitable motor car llowances. It was not easy to reconcile the many arying practices, nor to frame standard allow- nces to cover variable conditions.

Iore Bonus—or Consolidation?

Apart from these exceptions, however, the eneral conditions of service appeared to be orking satisfactorily, and it was on Part III—cales of salaries—that differences of opinion ere most acute. Apart from the many claims for mprovements in detail, there were two major ssues: whether they should continue to press e claim for an increased bonus; or whether ey should accept consolidation, taking the pportunity it offered to revise the existing scales, nd in particular to improve the rates for entrants the service and those aged between 21 and 25.

The employers had rejected the staff side claim r an increased bonus but had invited an alterna- ve claim for consolidation. That had been sub- itted, but without prejudice to the right of the aff side to return to the bonus claim should onference prefer.

If they went on with the bonus claim which the mployers had rejected, there would be complete isagreement between the two sides of the N.J.C., nd they would be forced to arbitration. But ecent decisions of the National Arbitration ribunal had not been favourable, and an adverse ecision would have far-reaching effects, not nly on the local government service, but also pon civil servants, teachers, and other black-oated workers. NALGO could not be the rst black-coated union to run the risk of such n award without an over-riding decision of onference. Nor, in view of the history of onsolidation in 1924 and 1925, could he imagine eaching agreement in the N.J.C. on consolidation ithout the support of Conference for it. Con- erence must decide whether it was to be bonus r consolidation: but the details—how much ncrease in bonus, or the terms of consolidation—must be left to the negotiators or the Arbitration Tribunal.

The employers' case for consolidation was, broadly, that local authorities wanted to know their commitments in the coming years, and fluctuating bonuses made that difficult. They also wanted to get away from associations with the war. On the other hand, the cost of living remained unstable and might continue to rise as subsidies were removed gradually.

"Consider the Charter in a spirit of service to local government, not in a spirit of narrow selfishness."—E. L. RILEY.

Of the scales generally, the N.E.C. was satisfied that the salaries in the lower age groups were unsatisfactory in relation to salaries paid by private enterprise and would create serious problems of recruitment unless they were soon improved. On the other hand, they could not expect too great an advance in the maximum of the General Division, which was intended to cover only officers engaged on routine duties in accordance with well-defined instructions and regulations. Many branches and local authorities had, he thought, approached grading in too narrow a sense, and should make more use of the definitions attaching to the higher grades to secure regrading and consequent advancement. In particular, branches and local joint committees should consider the duties attaching to each post to see if they did not warrant a higher grading. That was the answer to the fear of stagnation in the General Division.

As to qualifications, the N.E.C. maintained, and the staff side agreed, that initial gradings and the creation of establishments must be on the basis of duties performed and ability to perform those duties: qualification was for the future filling of posts.

It must not be assumed from that, however, that NALGO was not in favour of a fully qualified service. Its educational policy had been endorsed by successive Conferences over the past 20 years, and the N.E.C. could not emphasise too strongly the need for all local government officers to take the appropriate qualification.

There had been no serious criticism of Part IV of the Charter—Official Conduct—and the only item in it calling for emphasis was the paragraph recommending local authorities to ensure that questions relating to the appointment, promotion, dismissal, salary, conditions of service, or conduct of an officer should be considered in committee. The N.E.C. fully supported that recommendation.

Under Part V—Interpretation and Appeal—full use had been made of the decision that the N.J.C. should be the sole interpreting body, and several points of national importance had been determined. They must resist interpretations by provincial councils or local authorities.

It was not possible to have national conditions and to permit local "contracting-out." At first sight, the retaining of a local advantage made a strong appeal; but if one side to an agreement were given the right to break it in an upward direction, the other side would claim the right to break it in a downward direction. The N.E.C. strongly deprecated any departures from the national scheme by local authorities or branches.

They must not expect the N.J.C. to provide all the answers to all the questions at once. The present machinery was the only protection against depressed standards, and if it were to break up it would be difficult to replace it with anything nearly so effective. They must remember that the members on the employers' side were serving voluntarily, and could give only limited time to the work. If the machine were over-burdened in its early days, they might get a repetition of what happened in the early 1920's, when the then National Joint Council went out of existence, and it took over 20 years to restore the position.

Concern at Machine's Slowness

All were concerned at the slowness of the machine, but they were not alone in that complaint: most trade unions were critical of delays in the settlement of claims. Conference should remember that local government was not a one-grade service, and every settlement had to cater for many classes of officer. For example, more than 30 different scales had been submitted by the professional and sectional societies, and the relation of those scales to the national scales would be an involved and lengthy process.

But it was difficult to reconcile the claims for standard rates for such classes with the demand that the national scales were to be regarded as a minimum. They could not have it both ways: they must either stand by national standards or go back to the old method of local negotiation—and he did not think anybody wanted to do that.

The N.E.C., Mr. Riley concluded, welcomed constructive criticism and believed that the Charter could be improved upon; but he appealed to Conference to consider these matters in a spirit of service to local government and not in a spirit of narrow selfishness. If they would do that, then their deliberations would be an incentive to the Council to make even greater efforts during the coming year (cheers).

HIGHER BONUS DEMAND "In Line With Cost of Living"

From this preamble, heard with close and eager attention, Conference turned to the best and liveliest debate yet—that on cost-of-living bonus. It arose on a motion in the names of the **Scottish District Committee**, and the **Edinburgh and District, Salford,** and **West Ham** branches, declaring that the present bonus was totally inadequate and instructing the N.E.C. to "take all necessary steps at the earliest possible opportunity" to have it "completely revised with a view to a substantial increase so as to bring it in line with the actual present-day cost of living."

Moving it, J. K. BIGGERS, **Edinburgh,** claimed that if they could get a bonus anything like equivalent to the rise in the cost of living, much of the criticism of the Charter scales would disappear, and the N.E.C. would be free to engage in other fields. All knew that the Ministry of Labour cost-of-living index was worthless as a yardstick by which to adjust salaries and wages, and the Government had itself decided to replace it. Nevertheless, although the Ministry index today stood at only 31 per cent above 1939, the bonus for the majority of local government officers worked out at less than this. More reliable figures suggested that the real increase in the cost of living was nearer 55 per cent above the level for 1939. In view of that, his branch asked that bonus negotiations be resumed and conducted with the utmost vigour.

F. H. NEWMAN, **West Ham,** seconding, urged that the main object was more income, and whether that was obtained through a higher bonus or through consolidation was beside the point. According to the preamble to the Charter, the N.J.C. wanted to establish the local government service as one "offering a career likely to attract entrants of the type required to meet the future needs of local government." He understood that to mean that local authorities wanted staff of a

More Bonus or Consolidation?—N.E.C. Seeks a Lead

ood educational standard. But other employers alling for a similar standard—such as banks and insurance houses, and, in London, the L.C.C. and the Port of London Authority—were paying far more than the present General Division maximum. By any comparison, that maximum was unfavourable, both to the officer and, because of its effect on recruitment, to the local authority. If consolidation were the only method of securing an early increase, let the staff side ensure that it was an adequate one. The pill of consolidation should be sugared to the extent of at least £40—equivalent to raising the bonus from £60 to £100: anything less would make it a bitter one.

Members were concerned at the way in which the bonus claim was being negotiated (hear, hear!). What did the average member think when he read that the staff side had accepted the dictatorship of the employers' side on consolidation? Should not the reasons now given by Mr. Riley have been made available to the branches before delegates came to Conference? In any event, surely members were entitled to know the general case on which the staff side asked for an increase in bonus. They should have a statement on general policy and the targets set by the staff side.

He was not convinced that secrecy was the only successful basis upon which negotiations could be conducted. Were the N.E.C. to take the members into its confidence, it would create a much better relationship.

W. SHEPHERD, **Manchester,** put two questions to Mr. Riley: Had he in mind a time limit within which he or his successor as leader of the staff side intended to put forward a proposal for an increase in the bonus, or—if the Conference so decided—for consolidation at a higher figure; and was the staff side, which had asked Conference not to break away from the Charter, not itself promising unilateral divergencies as negotiating points?

VALUE OF CONSOLIDATION

Insurance Against "Axes"

W. H. LAKE, **Derbyshire,** moved his branch's amendment, calling on the N.E.C., simultaneously with improvement of the bonus, to take steps to have it consolidated in the basic salary. The branch agreed that there should be a higher bonus, he explained, but felt that, since the N.J.C. was already treading the path of consolidation, that was the best course: consolidation would be a form of insurance against a repetition of the Geddes and May "axes."

V. J. LUCK, **Brentwood,** complained that the rank and file members were mystified by the attitude of the N.E.C. on bonus. Looking back to the last Conference, and the Conference before that, he could not help feeling that Mr. Riley was going the way of all British heavy-weight champions (laughter).

"Was Mr. Riley going the way of all British heavy-weight champions?"

A year ago, they were told that the Charter had been bought at the expense of postponement of the bonus increase, but that the N.E.C. and the staff side, fully aware of the urgency of the problem, had prepared an almost watertight case for the increase as soon as it could be raised again. What had happened to that watertight case, and why had the employers been allowed to suggest that the cost of living for a sanitary inspector was less than that for a road-sweeper? Never in his association with NALGO, Mr. Luck declared, was he so disgusted as when he received the recent Headquarters statement on the bonus negotiations (cheers). It looked as if the N.E.C. had committed a grave error, and he called for a clear explanation from the platform before Conference gave the N.E.C. a blank cheque on consolidation (cheers). Turning to the N.E.C., Mr. Luck concluded amid cheers and laughter: "Twelve months ago you sold us an egg. We found it was a curate's egg—good in parts. Now you are trying to sell us a pig in a poke. We are not going to buy that pig until we see what it is like!"

"Rose Would Smell as Sweet"

E. L. RILEY, **N.E.C.,** replied that the N.E.C. honestly believed that there was an unassailable case for an increased bonus, and had prosecuted the campaign for it with vigour—so much so that had Conference delegates been sitting on the employers' side at the meeting of the N.J.C. at which it was argued, they would have gone out and cut their throats! Unfortunately, the employers were rather more hard-boiled (laughter).

The debate had been conducted at great length and with vigour. The staff side had claimed no more than the general level throughout the country for manual workers—about 35s. a week—a just claim. When it came to the vote, all 30 on the staff side had voted for, but all 30 on the employers' side had voted against, so that it was not carried. Then the staff side had retired and had sent for the independent chairman, SIR HORACE WILSON, and asked his advice. He, out of his vast wisdom in dealing with all manner of labour problems, had replied that the employers really wanted consolidation, that the bonus claim was being uselessly pressed, and that the right thing to do was to put up some alternative.

In asking the staff side to suggest terms for consolidation, the employers had made it clear by implication, that they were prepared to consider an increase in rates so long as it was not called a bonus: in other words, the rose would smell just as sweet—it meant a rise—but under another name. How much the rise would be—whether £15, £20, or £30—he would hesitate to suggest, but in addition to that flat rate increase, which gave a great advantage to the lower ranks of the service, he wanted to see improvements in the scale between 16 and 20, to stimulate recruitment, and between 21 and 25, to provide a living wage. If Conference adopted the motion and rejected the amendment, he would take it that it wanted an increased bonus and nothing else and that the members were prepared to pursue that claim to the limit. That would involve being in dispute with the employers, and taking the claim to the National Arbitration Tribunal—which might or might not grant it. Adoption of the amendment, on the other hand, implied consolidation—with an improvement of X points. He agreed with many of the critics of consolidation. On the other hand, it would put something in the pockets of the lower-paid members. It was for Conference to decide.

"Staff Side Out-Generalled"

But Conference was not yet satisfied, and A. F. HUTT, **Manchester,** returned to the attack, roundly opposing any idea that Mr. Riley and the staff side of the N.J.C. should have full power as negotiators. Mr. Riley had asked delegates to decide between bonus and consolidation—but how could they do that without adequate data? And what had they been given? Nothing except a vague promise of £15, £20, or £30. The employers had utterly "out-generalled" the staff side of the N.J.C., and he thought members would be "foxed" if they were not careful. They should be careful of the N.E.C., which had lost the bonus to get the Charter, and, having done that, was changing its ground and hinting at £15, £20, or £30 for consolidation. The civil servants had agreed to consolidation, and were now grumbling all over the country about the terms, which were better than those suggested by Mr. Riley for the General Division.

"I warn you," Mr. Hutt concluded, "that you are going to buy a pup unless you insist on standards equal to those in comparable employments. And keep clear of consolidation—once you get into their clutches with that, Lord knows where you will end" (laughter and cheers).

P. PAXTON, **Nottingham,** speaking as a member in the General Division, to whom the cost of living was of great concern, declared that there was much distrust, both of the originally suggest bonus increase and of the figures being put forwa for consolidation. From the start of the w members had not had a fair deal from the N.J. on bonus. Not one of the successive awards h made up for the real increase in the cost of livi and the last award of £60 worked out at on 24 per cent for the man getting £5 a week in 193 His colleagues in the lower divisions were expe ing much more than the increase suggested, a he supported the seconder of the motion, who h asked for not less than £100—and even that wou not bring the bonus up to its proper level. T status of members today, especially in the low grades, was much lower than in 1933.

E. A. S. YOUNG, **N.E.C.,** reminded Conferen that in national negotiations there were two sid —the employers' and the employees'. Th must face the fact, whether they liked it or n that the members of the employers' side h definitely and finally made up their minds that t bonus must be cleared away. They had point out that teachers, civil servants, and most oth professional workers now had consolidated scal The only alternative to consolidation was a fig for a higher bonus in the arbitration tribunal and if they decided on that, members must prepared for an adverse decision.

Mr. Hutt, the Manchester bogey-man (laughte had said that the consolidation proposal wou give lower salaries than in the civil service. Th was not true. The civil servants had obtain an addition of £78 for the lower grades, a NALGO was working on a basis higher th that.

"Might Be a Frost"

T. FERNLEY, **Manchester,** suggested that, in t present continuing scarcity, the cost of living w likely to rise still higher. Already, the ci servants were keenly regretting the consolidati of their bonuses and salaries last year, and we finding—as NALGO would find if it conso dated hastily and unthinkingly—that what h looked like a reasonable settlement had turn out to be a frost. The bank officers were al pressing for a revision of their bonus.

In his budget speech, Mr. Dalton had announc the Government's decision gradually to aband subsidies; already, they were being lifted, a prices were going up. To consolidate now wou be midsummer madness—mortgaging the futu for a momentary gain.

They would best serve the interests of membe by refusing consolidation and taking the cla for a higher bonus to the arbitration tribun Some had suggested that they might come aw empty-handed. No army could go into bat absolutely certain of victory—but the fact th victory could not be guaranteed was no reas why it should not be tried. They had alrea forgone twelve months' bonus increase, and no when they had made a reasonable request to t other side to consider a belated advance, th were turned down peremptorily, the employe refusing even to listen to them. Was that t way to operate a joint industrial council? Unfo tunately, the staff side had prejudiced the matt by accepting a request to put forward proposa for consolidation. Such a dangerous step w unjustified without the authorisation of Co ference.

It was approaching five o'clock, the Conferen hall was very hot, and delegates were impatie to finish the debate when L. BEVAN, N.E.C and staff side chairman, rose to reply amid chorus of calls to "Vote." But Mr. Bev insisted on being heard, firmly telling delegates amid more uproar—that if they would not he him, they would have to find another chairma for their staff side. He had a right to be hea on such an important matter.

Study—and Play—at St. Andrews

Scotland extends a warm welcome to officers of both sides of the Border to spend the week *August 16 to 23,* at St. Andrews University, studying local government. There are facilities for boating, golfing and tennis.

Students at the summer school will be accommodated at 13s. a day at Macintosh Hall. Feeding is reported to be first class. Write HARRY RAE, NALGO, 67, West Nile Street, Glasgow, C.1.

Branches Demand Right to Improve On The Charter

Much had been said in the debate about present price levels and the failure of the bonus to compensate for them. That might be so, but if N A L G O took its bonus claim to the Arbitration Tribunal it would have to compare salary plus bonus today with salary in 1939. Mr. Paxton, of Nottingham, had said that in his case the present bonus of £60 amounted to only 20 per cent of salary. But in 1939, the maximum of the General Division in Nottingham was £220. That had gone up to £300, plus a bonus of £60—£360—an increase of much more than 20 per cent.

"We are not quite such mugs as some people think" —L. BEVAN, chairman of N. J. C. staff side.

Mr. Paxton rose on a point of order to declare that he had not mentioned 20 per cent, but Mr. Bevan, brushing aside the interruption with the remark that it was a statement, not a point of order, reaffirmed his argument that any claim to the Tribunal would have to relate the total increase, in salaries and bonus, since 1939, with the rise in the cost of living.

It had been argued that consolidation was premature and that, if the cost of living continued to rise, they would be tied to a fixed scale which they would be unable to improve. "We are not quite such mugs as some people think," Mr. Bevan observed, amid laughter and cheers. "We do not envisage consolidation in any final form—that would have been foolish—and in the proposals we have submitted we have made provision for going again if there is any radical increase in the cost of living."

N.E.C. Not Defeatist

The best course, he suggested, was to accept the sincere statement on the part of the N.E.C. that, if Conference wanted consolidation, the Council would go for consolidation, and make it worth while. If, on the other hand, Conference did not want consolidation, but preferred to go for a higher bonus, the Council would, if necessary, go to the Arbitration Tribunal. Frankly, however, he did not think there was any chance of getting an increase out of the tribunal. One speaker had accused the N.E.C. of defeatism and said that a good general went into battle without being able to guarantee victory. That was not Monty's way (cheers). He would not go into battle until he knew he was going to win (cheers).

"Your representatives on the N.J.C. have to get the employers to hear their arguments," Mr. Bevan concluded. "My job is to listen to what you want and to try to get it for you. But it is useless our going as negotiators to the employers and saying: We must have this and that, and not a thing less. If the N.J.C. ever gets the idea that the staff side are going as delegates rather than as negotiators, nothing will be achieved at all. I ask Conference to approve the amendment."

Conference did so, by show of hands, and promptly adjourned, leaving the fate of the motion in the air, since there were three other amendments still to be considered.

But doubts as to the effect of the vote were quickly cleared up on Wednesday morning, when Mr. Bevan, for the N.E.C., accepted, with one reservation, the other amendments—designed to secure a uniform bonus, applicable to all grades, and equal for men and women. His reservation was that the Council saw no case for paying the same bonus to juniors as was obtained for married men with families. The motion as carried read:

That this Conference (*a*) considers that the present cost-of-living bonus is totally inadequate; (*b*) instructs the National Executive Council to take all necessary steps at the earliest possible opportunity to have the bonus completely revised with a view to a substantial increase so as to bring it in line with the actual present-day cost of living, and at the same time to take steps to have the revised bonus consolidated in the basic salary.

CHARTER AS MINIMUM
Ably-Argued Case

There followed another and even livelier debate in which, for the first time, Conference insisted on flouting the advice of the N.E.C. This was on a motion by the **Metropolitan District Committee**, and the **L.C.C., St. Pancras,** and **Stepney** branches, declaring the Association's policy to be to establish the Charter as a minimum, and instructing the N.E.C. to take every possible step to that end.

Moving this in an ably-delivered and well-reasoned speech, J. B. McCann, newly elected to the N.E.C., but speaking from the floor as a representative of the **L.C.C. branch,** said that its sponsors regarded it as one of the most vital before Conference. They were seeking to amend the very basis on which conditions of service and rates of pay had been negotiated, and they believed that, by so doing, they would speedily achieve those improvements in the Charter which all desired.

Emphasising that the motion would *not* have the effect of abandoning the staffs of the less tractable authorities to their fate, Mr. McCann declared that the Charter must be preserved as an enforceable minimum standard, which must be speedily and considerably improved. He believed that the policy represented by the notice of motion offered the means of securing that.

The constitution of the National Joint Council and the agreement to implement the Charter as an invariable standard had, in effect, united the ranks of the employing authorities. That had a good effect when the Charter was negotiated, insofar as it made the more backward authorities toe the line represented by the Charter—although it also involved substantial concessions in the shape of worsened conditions by the staffs of the more progressive authorities. But today they faced the position that any improvements in the Charter must be extorted from the employers as a whole. It was hardly likely that, so long as the employers were able mutually to support each other at the national level, the staff side would find them forthcoming in offering improvements.

That had an uncomfortable resemblance to the unhappy position in other industries with national wages agreements, where it was found that employers supported each other in a policy of mutual intransigence, negotiations were long drawn out, and there was widespread frustration and impatience at the apparent ineffectiveness of the trade unions and their negotiating machinery. That was the situation which, in other fields, had been the primary factor in causing unofficial strikes. It was a situation which N A L G O must not allow to develop. On the contrary, it should be the Association's policy that the Charter must be a minimum standard and that local improvements could and should be negotiated whenever possible, either at district or branch level. By that means, concessions would be secured which would lead to improvements in the Charter as a whole.

Today, many authorities were prepared to offer concessions of various kinds. Some would grant better annual leave; some were sympathetic to the suggestion of equal pay; others realised that the rates of pay at various levels were unsatisfactory. Some, in fact, had already made much needed improvements on the Charter. But N A L G O, tied down by the policy that the Charter was sacrosanct—a kind of stone tablet brought down from the mountain—actually encouraged backward employers to restrain progressive ones from improving conditions. It was an unbelievable distortion of the Association's true rôle as a trade union, and it would speedily produce bitterness and frustration amongst members.

Staff Side "Hamstrung in Advance"

There was not even consistency in applying the principle of uniformity if a loophole could be found. Many authorities were, at the suggestion of the National Joint Council itself, taking advantage of a clause in the Charter allowing accelerated increments—intended as recognition of special merit or ability—to offer more adequate rates to young entrants.

The major result of the present policy was that, when negotiating improvements in the Charter—and there had not been any yet—the staff side was hamstrung in advance, because there were so few standards of comparison in the local government service.

Reference had already been made to the favourable consolidation agreement concluded between the L.C.C. staff association and the County Council. Broadly, that provided for a percentage consolidation addition to the previous basic rates of 45 per cent on the first £200 of salary, 30 per cent on the next £200, and 10 per cent on the

"Twelve months ago you sold us an egg . . . now you are trying to sell us a pig in a poke . . . we are going to buy a pup."

Move to Add "No Detriment" Clause to Charter

remainder, so that, on the first £400 of basic salary there was a consolidation addition of £150. The new scales gave £150 a year to general clerical entrants at 16, rising by increments of £19 10s. for boys and girls to £286, where sex differentiation began, men proceeding to £468 and women to £403. The rates for higher grades were increased proportionately.

He thought it unfortunate that such an example should have come from virtually the only large local authority outside the National Whitley machinery and should be to the credit of a staff association independent of NALGO. They had, however, blazed the trail and NALGO should welcome the substantial advance represented by that agreement, because it provided a most valuable standard of comparison (cheers).

"Tying Our Own Hands"

The L.C.C. branch hoped to see comparable scales made general in the service. They hoped that the staff side representatives would turn them to good effect in their negotiations. If they did not, there was something the matter with NALGO or the National Whitley machinery, or both. How much easier would be their task, if they could point to other similar examples—but so long as the Association did not allow them to occur because of that "invariable standard" policy, it would be doing the employers' work of barring the easiest path to improving the Charter as a whole. The Association was, in fact, performing the contortionist feat of tying its own hands behind its back before entering the ring. If progress were to be made, the handicap had to be removed and the basic policy revised.

M. PLISKIN, **Stepney**, said that many members in his branch were also members of other unions, and they could not understand the argument that the Charter could not be varied. They felt that it was contrary to trade union policy, since in all other agreements the terms were regarded as a minimum capable of improvement. It was unreasonable to expect members to agree to worse conditions under the Charter than they had obtained before it. Some of his own members had had their holidays reduced, and they could not understand why they must make that sacrifice.

"Dangerous to Depart from Scales"

G. C. COOKSON, **Bexley**, moved an amendment to limit the effect of the motion to conditions of service, excluding salary scales. Although his members largely agreed with Mr. McCann, he explained, they considered it desirable to draw a distinction between the salary scales and the conditions of service. They thought it dangerous to allow, at that stage, any departure, upwards or downwards, from the scales—which, in any event, allowed a good deal of variation, since they gave no directions on how a particular job should be graded.

Service conditions were different. Many authorities had better conditions before the Charter was adopted, and some had retained them. His branch agreed that to allow authorities to improve on the Charter conditions, whilst retaining the Charter as a minimum, would lead to better things eventually.

S. LEADBETTER, **Bexley**, seconding the amendment, described the salary scales of the Charter as the ginger-bread and the service conditions as the gilt upon it. He saw no objection to employers putting on more gilt if they wished, but thought it dangerous to permit any tampering with the ginger-bread itself: since, if the better ones were allowed to improve it, others not so good might start nibbling it away.

L. BEVAN, replying for the N.E.C., reminded Conference that the Charter was adopted on a resolution of the National Joint Council to which both sides were parties that the "absence of uniformity" in salary scales was not desirable and that steps should be taken to introduce uniform national scales and standard conditions.

The issue was whether the Charter applied to all officers as a standard—as did the agreed salaries and conditions in the civil service, teaching profession, and the police—or whether it was something to which alterations could be made here and there according to local conditions. The N.E.C. took the view that standards must be standards everywhere—and if a standard could be applied to all it could be raised for all.

If the motion were accepted and the Charter regarded as a minimum, they would return to the old position, which they had condemned and from which they had just escaped, of having conditions determined by 15 provincial councils or by individual local authorities. For years members had been clamouring for national scales of salaries and conditions of service. They had had them for twelve months. Did they now want to go back to the old way?

He was equally opposed to the Bexley amendment, since the principle was the same whether they were dealing with salaries or with holidays.

Mr. McCann had referred to the higher salaries recently secured by the L.C.C. Staff Association—but he could tell Conference that the salaries which the staff side was now seeking under consolidation would compare favourably with those.

Conference rejected the Bexley amendment, together with another, briefly moved by G. H. BEARTUP, **Sutton and Cheam**, designed to ensure that any variations in the Charter should be "negotiated on a national basis in accordance with the principles of Whitleyism," and Mr. McCann returned to the microphone to reply to the debate. He failed, he said, to understand the N.E.C.'s argument that, once a standard had been agreed, it could not be varied by local improvement. The Wages Councils Act of 1945 laid it down that all employers must observe terms and

Mr. Keighley was "attempting to revive a dead horse."

conditions of employment *not less favourable than* the recognised terms and conditions; but there was no suggestion that an employer might not observe *more favourable* terms and conditions, or that, if he did so, his action was prejudicial to other workers less fortunate than his. Had a single dispute with an employer who paid more than the recognised rates been taken to the National Arbitration Tribunal? NALGO should fight for its members on the lines of a military operation, advancing on one front, infiltrating somewhere else, and then advancing again on another; there was no point in waiting until all the troops had been brought up into the front line (cheers).

Amid much enthusiasm, Conference carried the motion on a show of hands and with a substantial majority—the first serious defeat to be sustained by the N.E.C.

PRESERVING PAST GAINS

A "Dead Horse" Revived

Emboldened by this triumph for the opposition, E. W. KEIGHLEY, **Woolwich**, launched with resounding vigour into his branch's motion instructing the N.E.C. to take every action possible to secure a general "no-detriment" clause in the Charter.

He was attempting, he said, to revive a dead horse. A year ago, at Brighton, after much discussion, Conference approved—and the N.E.C. accepted—a motion viewing "with deep concern" the absence of the no-detriment clause. That concern was equally deep today. It had been said that the members prejudiced by that omission were in the minority, and should give way to the majority; but it had always been the policy of NALGO to protect the rights of minorities. The present position, he felt, might be expressed by parodying Mr. Churchill's famous phrase: "Never in the history of NALGO negotiation have so many been mucked about by so few!" (laughter).

The minority in this instance represented a most important part of the membership—that part whose successful fight to improve conditions of service had made the Charter possible. Those members should not be thrown on one side. In his own branch, they had lost three days' holiday: others had lost six days, and some even nine days.

Refused by Employers

J. HARRIS, **Hayes and Harlington**, moved an amendment to make the application of the "no-detriment" clause retrospective to the date of adoption of the Charter. If they were to resuscitate a dead horse, he explained, they must first find the horse; in other words, if the clause were accepted but not back-dated to March 31, 1946, Mr. Keighley's minority would never regain what it had lost.

L. BEVAN, N.E.C., opposed, for the same reason as the N.E.C. had opposed a similar resolution last year. The omission of a "no-detriment" clause—which the staff side had done all in its power to secure but which the employers had refused—was one of the concessions the staff side had to make to secure the general improvement in salaries obtained through the Charter. There was no reason to believe that the employers would grant now what they refused in 1946. The staff side accepted that position, and the N.E.C. asked Conference not to instruct it to repudiate the agreement made twelve months ago. Members must understand that if agreements were to be reached in the Whitley Council, concessions must be made on both sides. The N.E.C. view was that the staff side should take every opportunity of securing improvements in the Charter which would benefit everyone, rather than fight now for a "no-detriment" clause which would benefit only a few. He therefore asked Conference to reject both motion and amendment.

But Conference by now was in defiant mood, and adopted the motion, although with that inconsequence which is one of its most charming, if exasperating, features, it rejected the amendment which gave it force. **Sunderland** thereupon withdrew its amendment demanding that no agreement on service conditions be entered into in future without a "no-detriment" clause.

ADDRESS BY T. W. BURDEN, M.P.

NALGO's Right to Speak for All Officers "Incontestable"

At this stage, the President called upon T. W. BURDEN, M.P., an old friend of NALGO, who had given valuable assistance to the Association in the House of Commons, and was always a welcome visitor to Conference.

Mr. Burden, introducing himself, amid cheers, as a member of East Ham County Borough Council for more than twenty-one years, warmly congratulated the Association on the splendid increase in membership recorded in the annual report—a membership which proved the incontestable right of NALGO to speak for and negotiate on behalf of all the professional, technical, administrative, and clerical officers employed in local government throughout the country (cheers). He congratulated the Association on its decision to widen the scope of its membership. That decision was a very wise one, enabling the Association to keep in line with the changes in the set-up of our social services.

Of the Association's parliamentary work, paragraphs 88 to 104 in the annual report (dealing with the action taken on legislative matters) did record something attempted and something done. He blushed at the number of times his name was mentioned—but he assured Conference that, but for the painstaking work of W. C. ANDERSON, the legal officer, and G. D. HELLIWELL, of the Parliamentary agents, the Association's claims could not have been adequately represented in the House of Commons (cheers). He was grateful, too, for the invaluable assistance of the law and parliamentary committee.

Many delegates were particularly interested in

MICROPHONE MOODS

The Positive . . .

the Secretive . . .

the Passive . . .

the Authoritative . . .

the Contemplative . . .

The Aggressive . . .

the Remonstrative . . .

the Explosive . . .

the Appreciative . . .

and the Expansive.

he National Insurance Act and the future of ublic assistance staffs. He wanted to assure hem that, while the Bill was under consideration the House, everything humanly possible was one to protect those officers. The Association's ase was competently and vigorously put, and o case with which he had been associated on ehalf of NALGO had been given greater are and attention. He profoundly regretted hat the Association's clauses, which would have fforded adequate protection to the staff, had not een accepted. His colleagues on the standing ommittee had pressed those amendments to the tmost, but the Minister of National Insurance ad found himself unable to accept them.

Will See Justice Done"

Since then, the Association's claims had been ressed in season and out of season, and in every ossible quarter. It had now been announced hat the Bill finally to break up the Poor Law as to be passed before July next year. That ould provide another opportunity to deal with he problem, and a supreme effort must and ould be made to see that fair play and justice ere given to the public assistance staffs. They ere not asking for special privileges, but they id claim that those men and women who had endered such excellent service to the poor and eedy should have fair consideration in the new rganisation that was to be set up (cheers).

There were many other problems—for local overnment today was meeting heavy weather. maller authorities had lost, or were losing, some f their powers and functions, such as education, larger authorities. Other functions, such as ospitals, were being transferred to appointed oards. Electricity and transport were going, nd public assistance, gas, and other services were arked down for central control. While he greed that local government could not remain nchanged in a changing world, and that social ervices must be shaped to twentieth-century eeds, he did contend that the good will and spirit of public service which had been the pride of local government in the past should not be wasted, and that, somehow or other, those outstanding features of local government ought to find a place in the new set-up (cheers).

Good government was no substitute for self-government. The time had arrived, he suggested, for all the associations of local authorities to review the whole position—and he believed that, if they did so, the chance of their reaching agreement was better than it had been for twenty-five years.

After his long experience of local government, he acknowledged with gratitude the debt the elected representatives owed to the officers. Without their devoted service, their trained intelligence, and their advice, it would be impossible for local government to continue. Notwithstanding the changes, there was still a great future for the trained and capable administrator. But they could not afford to be complacent. Salaries and conditions of service must be such as to make employment in the local government service an honourable position in society; and the aspirations of local government staffs should be adequately protected on the floor of the House of Commons.

In the last House of Commons, NALGO had the assistance and advice of GEOFFREY HUTCHINSON, who rendered invaluable service. He was no longer there, but Mr. Burden hoped that, at the next Conference, Lt.-Col. DEREK WALKER-SMITH, Conservative M.P. for Hertford, would be on the platform as a worthy successor. Although poles apart politically, he believed they could work together in the House of Commons to serve the interests of NALGO (cheers).

He thanked Conference for the welcome it had given him and assured delegates of his readiness to advance the cause of NALGO in the House of Commons and elsewhere (cheers).

Moving a vote of thanks to Mr. Burden, E. A. SYRATT, **Sheffield**, said that never before in the Association's history had the welfare of its members been so closely bound up with the issues confronting Parliament. That fact made it more essential than ever that the Association should be represented in the House of Commons by someone able to watch and protect its interests, and he was sure that they could not have chosen anybody better than Alderman Burden (cheers).

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HIGHER PAY CAMPAIGN
"Our Demands Too Low"

When the cheers—as the President remarked, one of the few unanimous votes of the proceedings—had died down, A. F. HUTT, **Manchester**, introduced his branch's motion which, while welcoming the introduction of a minimum wage for the service, expressed dissatisfaction with the application by local authorities of the scales, and instructed the N.E.C. to begin immediately a strong campaign for rates of pay at least equal to those now paid by "banks, insurance companies, etc."

Conference had already instructed the N.E.C. to regard the Charter as a minimum, said Mr. Hutt, but Manchester wanted to go further than that. Everywhere, in applying the Charter, grades had been telescoped and members were dissatisfied. Was that because local government officers were greedy and selfish and had fixed their demands too high? They knew it was not: the real trouble was that demands had been pitched too low. They were lagging behind the civil service, the insurance companies, the banks, and the building societies. It was harder for local authorities to get staff now than it had ever been—simply because the new entrants were going to those other offices—anywhere except into local government. That was not fair to local government and to the people already in the service. The N.E.C. lacked an adequate modern objective

Call for Higher Scales and End of "Carry-Over"

—but this could provide one, and Conference was the only place to fix it. If the motion were added to the instructions already given to the N.E.C., they would be able to bring local government up to date.

H. S. BAILEY, **Manchester**, seconding, said it was well known that local authorities were secretly paying higher rates than those laid down in the Charter. That was absolutely wrong—but they could not get adequate women staff without doing so.

Opposing for the N.E.C., J. W. Moss suggested that Manchester was being inconsistent: it complained of the unsatisfactory application of the scales, but instead of asking the N.E.C. or the staff side of the N.J.C. to do anything about that, it asked for an entirely new standard of rates based on those of banks, insurance companies, etc. True, some banks and insurance companies had recently obtained greatly improved consolidated scales of salaries. The staff side had used those scales, with other evidence, in support of its consolidation proposals now before the N.J.C. But it would be dangerous for Conference to attach local government officers to the banks and insurance companies. They were already trying to do what Manchester wanted, and Conference should let them go ahead with the present negotiations—with the safeguard that consolidated salaries must be open to revision in the event of any substantial increase in the cost of living.

Mr. Hutt, replying, said that Mr. Moss had not answered a single point put forward, although he (Mr. Hutt) had deliberately pulled his punches, believing that the fight should be between the N.J.C. staff side and the employers, not between the branches and the N.E.C.

Conference, the bit now well between its teeth, once again carried the motion against the N.E.C.

GENERAL DIVISION TOO LOW

"Manual Worker Starts £30 Higher"

Next came a comprehensive Norwich motion expressing the view that the minimum salary of the General Division was insufficient, and the rate of progress to the maximum far too slow, to attract suitable candidates to the service, or to encourage existing officers to remain in it, and instructing the N.E.C. to press immediately for a complete revision of the General Division scale and for a general improvement in the scales of the Miscellaneous Division.

Moving this, R. B. HUTHWAITE, **Norwich**, confessed that some of the speeches from the platform almost inspired him to sing, "Gorblimey, Old Riley, we are doing well"! (laughter). But Mr. Riley had hinted that the N.E.C. was proposing to do something about the scales to which the motion referred. Action was urgently necessary. In his own town hall, a junior was paid only £90 a year at 16—but if he entered the Corporation's service as a manual worker he would get £120 a year! Even if the recruitment scale were improved, men and women would not stay in the service at the present rate of progress in the General Division and with the present maximum. In his own town, more than 50 per cent of the permanent staff were graded in either the General or the Miscellaneous Divisions, and that had caused much dissatisfaction: judging from LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE, that dissatisfaction had been pretty general. He appealed especially for the ex-warriors. Their only hope was to telescope the present scales to provide a reasonable wage at an earlier age: he suggested that the present maximum should be reached not later than the age of twenty-seven. At the same time, the General Division should be given a new and higher maximum. £300 a year was too low in face of the current cost of living.

Finally, there were those in the Miscellaneous Division. Many who were tossed into this "Cinderella Division" were officers who, before the Charter, had been recruited in the normal way, but who had, at some time, changed their jobs to better their positions. They were now in an invidious position, because had they stayed in their original jobs they would have obtained higher grades.

Warrington branch having withdrawn its amendment to substitute "as soon as possible" for "immediately" in the instruction to the N.E.C., P. H. WIGLEY, **Birmingham**, moved an amendment calling for a scale providing the present General Division maximum at age 26. We were told, he said, that we must "Work or Want": but "Work and Wait" should not be the slogan of the General Division. The Charter provided for progress reports at 21 and 26. Why should an officer whose work was assessed as good and efficient at 26 have to wait another four years before getting his reward? And why should a clerical worker wait until he was 30 before he received the rate for the job, which was paid to a manual worker at a much earlier age? Now that a higher educational standard was required (in Birmingham it was that of school certificate) it was only just that a bigger salary should be paid at a much earlier age.

Many ex-warriors were dissatisfied with the slow progress through the General Division, and were leaving for better-paid jobs.

Employers Want to Pay More

In **Birmingham**, before the merger with NALGO, the Guild had persuaded the city council to pay the maximum of the first salary grade at 26 instead of 29. Now they had Charter scales, but only a week before Conference the city council, as a result of the failure of the General Division scale to attract suitable entrants, had agreed to advance all salaries in that Division by four increments, so that the maximum would be reached at 26. That proposal was to be submitted to the National Joint Council, backed by a personal interview between the chairman of the Birmingham salaries committee and the chairman of the National Joint Council. The fact that Birmingham city council was prepared to back the proposal on the employers' side and was as keen to get it through as was the staff, showed that the amendment was neither illusory nor unattainable.

Replying for the N.E.C., G. C. MARTIN assured Conference that this time the platform was in full agreement with the speakers. They knew that the General Division was unsatisfactory and when the Charter was negotiated had tried to get better scales, but failed to win over the employers. Now they were trying again, in the consolidation proposals. At the same time, he must warn Conference of the danger that, if the General Division were raised too high, most officers would be condemned to spend their lives in it. He suggested that the Norwich motion and the amendments—of which there were two more, by **Bristol** and **Lancashire** county, both calling for higher rates and earlier maxima—be referred to the N.E.C., and to this course Conference agreed.

The N.E.C. also accepted, without debate, a somewhat similar motion by **Islington**, calling for substantial increases in the lower ranges of the General Division. It opposed, however, **Stepney**'s motion calling for amalgamation of the General and Clerical Divisions, with the addition of £60 to the basic salary of each age in the scale, Mr. Riley suggesting that it would be wrong to tie the negotiators down to precise figures. Conference agreed, and rejected the motion.

NEW GRADES FOR TYPISTS

"A Raw Deal in Charter"

Miss G. S. SMITH, **Coulsdon and Purley**, followed with a motion (in which she incorporated an amendment by **Southampton**) instructing the N.E.C. to press for separate grades for typists, shorthand typists, and machine operators. Disclaiming all self-interest in the motion, Miss Smith confessed that she was a librarian who typed with two fingers; but that, having tried to learn shorthand, she had a great respect for people who were efficient at it. Her branch felt that shorthand-typists had had a raw deal in the national scales and should have a scale of their own (cheers).

For the N.E.C., J. W. Moss accepted the principle of the motion, but hoped that Conference would not be a party to any separate grade for shorthand-typists, machine operators, and the like, with a maximum lower than the maximum of the General Division after consolidation. They were anxious to prevent employers coming along with a higher minimum—as they might do in view of the scarcity of these classes of employees—but a lower maximum than that of the General Division. With that understanding, the N.E.C. would accept the motion. Conference approved.

Miss G. FAINT, **Plymouth**, next belied her name by launching a vigorous attack on the "carry-over" provision. This was in support of her branch's motion deprecating the "invidious anomalies" of the "carry-over" provision, as a result of which experienced clerks might be appointed at the maximum of the General Division, whilst officers with life-long service had to progress to that same maximum by four six-monthly increments, and calling for immediate action, with retrospective effect, to right these anomalies.

Her branch was confident, said Miss Faint, that the motion would meet with general support, for there could not be a branch in the country where the "carry-over" clause had not caused dissatisfaction and unrest. It was so obviously wrong that an officer with many years' service should have to wait eighteen months for his maximum, while a newcomer, if over thirty, was placed on it immediately: in Plymouth they knew of an officer with twenty-seven years' service in the treasurer's department having to teach his job to a newcomer who was getting more pay.

"Gross Unfairness"

They all knew the arguments of the N.E.C. that there had to be give-and-take to secure the Charter, that many authorities had so much leeway to make up before their officers reached the dizzy heights of £300 a year, that they would not swallow it in one bite, and that there had to be a compromise, with disgruntled officers as its price.

Now that the Charter was an established fact there must be many on the employers' side who realised the gross unfairness of the position, and would welcome a move to right such an obvious wrong. It was not too late, even though the waiting period was nearly up.

A. E. KELL, **Bristol**, seconding, urged the N.E.C. to collect evidence of such obvious unfairness and make an attempt, however belated, to restore the loss of seniority.

L. BEVAN, **N.E.C.**, replying, again reminded delegates that the National Joint Council consisted of two sides, and no proposal could

Miss Smith had a great respect for those efficient at shorthand.

adopted without a majority vote of each side. When the Charter was negotiated, the staff side did their best to ensure that every officer should go on the date of its adoption, to his proper place on the new scales. But the employers would not agree, and the "carry-over" arrangement was adopted as a compromise and the limit to which they would go. The N.E.C. realised that it had operated unfairly, but the anomalies would right themselves in October—and there was no prospect of getting the employers to agree to any change now. Notwithstanding the anomalies, they should not forget that most of the members who had complained about the "carry-over" would have been much worse off if there had been no Charter at all.

Conference, however, resisted these appeals and, when a show of hands gave no clear result, adopted the motion on a count by 549 votes to 538.

The N.E.C. accepted without discussion the next two motions, designed to secure better application of the national scales. The first, in the name of **Gateshead**, declared that the national scales, apart from the General Division, were not being uniformly applied, and instructed the N.E.C. to collect information on the general position in the country and to consider necessary action to obtain equity. The second, put forward by **Plymouth**, urged the N.E.C. to expedite the application

Agenda Too Congested – 55 Items Referred to N.E.C.

"Don't all shout at once!"

he scales on a national basis, and to effect a comparative valuation of posts of similar standing throughout the country.

More discussion took place on a further motion, moved by J. MURRAY, **Middlesex**, instructing the N.E.C. to negotiate grading proposals on a national basis without delay for officers likely to be affected by pending legislation. Three departments were affected by pending legislation, Mr. Murray explained—public health, utility services, and public assistance, and the latter was threatened with extinction. The need for national negotiation of the grades for these officers was shown by the fact, that, today, men doing similar work were being paid at rates ranging from higher clerical to A.P.T. VII. Mr. Murray accepted a **Hertfordshire** amendment to make any negotiations subject to comprehensive "no detriment" arrangements.

L. S. RICHARDSON, **Middlesex**, seconding, commented on the ease with which, he alleged, the various classes of delegates could be identified on sight: the N.E.C., sleek and well-fed; the average rank and filer; and, at the end of the scale, the grubby little fellow in grey flannels who always turned out to be a public assistance officer!

E. F. BACON, N.E.C., said that the Council was in sympathy with the motion, and was also ready to accept an amendment by **Northmet** branch, inserting a proviso that nothing be done to delay the "recognition" of Company branches and the setting up of interim Whitley machinery for such branches, and that any negotiations should be without prejudice to the rights and grading that Company officers may have obtained in the interim. But he opposed a **West Riding** amendment viewing with "grave concern" the alleged delay by the staff side of the N.J.C. in considering the scales for social welfare staffs. There had been no delay by the staff side. What had happened was that the Association of Social Welfare Officers, together with 29 other sectional societies, had submitted its proposals to the Joint Consultative Committee. That Committee—which was a consultative, not an executive body—provisionally approved the proposals, and referred them to the N.E.C. But when the N.E.C. examined the various scales submitted, it found that some societies had based their proposals on population ranges, for which they had taken varying standards. It was obviously essential to have a common population range, and relate the various proposals to that. This population range was not agreed by the Consultative Committee until September, 1946, after which the societies had to review the amended proposals. The final proposals for the majority of the sectional societies were not ready for submission to the staff side until January 1947, and some had not even yet been received.

The N.E.C. also opposed a **Hertfordshire** amendment, seeking to make the negotiations subject to comprehensive "no detriment" arrangements. NALGO's policy had always been the greatest good for the greatest number, and if anything was done in the way of "no detriment" proposals it must be done for the whole of the service and not for a section.

Conference approved the motion and the Northmet amendment and rejected the Hertfordshire and West Riding amendments.

"Weighting" for Big Towns.

J. PEPPER, N.E.C., accepted the next motion, formally moved by C. A. SMALLMAN, **Birmingham**, instructing the N.E.C. to take the necessary steps to have the national salary scales weighted in favour of officers of the corporations of large provincial cities, **Southend** branch having first withdrawn its amendment to extend the weighting to all areas in which a higher cost of living was recognised in workmen's grading.

Those who had expected the next motion, **Gateshead**'s call for a 35-hour week, to arouse lively discussion were disappointed, for the branch withdrew it. But A. C. WILLIAMSON, **Richmond, Surrey**, moved his branch's motion instructing the staff side of the N.J.C. to press for the institution of a five-day working week without any reduction of hours. This, he explained, did not call for immediate introduction of the five-day week, merely that the N.E.C. should take every step to secure it. That it was practicable had been proved by his own authority which, for the past six months, had been operating a five-day week for the bulk of the staff, who worked only one Saturday in four. When the idea was first mooted, some thought it would not work; but now the staff was unanimously in favour of its continuance.

H. A. JURY, **Wimbledon**, believing that the five-day week should be our aim, but that now was not the time to claim it, moved an amendment to substitute for the words "to press" in the motion the Much Cowslipian formula: "at an opportune time to consider the question of pressing."

E. L. RILEY, N.E.C., replying, evoked—and welcomed—a roar of contradiction when he declared that everybody wanted to do less work for more pay. One difficulty, he continued, was that nobody appeared to know what was meant by a five-day working week. They usually thought of it in terms of county halls and town halls, which could close on Saturday and Sunday—but not all local government officers were clerks, and hospitals and electricity, water, sewerage and transport undertakings could not stop work at the week-end. Local government was a seven-day service.

Conference rejected both motion and amendments, whereupon **Sunderland** withdrew its motion instructing the N.E.C. to press for the immediate adoption of a five-day week with a maximum of 35 working hours.

At this point, F. W. HUMPHRIES, **North Western and North Wales district**, called the attention of delegates to the fact—of which many had already become anxiously aware—that, although the time of Conference was nearly half gone, it had reached only item 79 on an agenda of 282 items. Without some drastic action to speed up the proceedings, they would have to finish on the Thursday evening with many items unconsidered. Mr. Humphries accordingly moved that the whole of the next 70 items—all being proposals to amend or expand the Charter—be remitted without debate to the N.E.C.

From the platform, E. L. RILEY gave an assurance that, if Conference agreed to this course, the N.E.C. would seriously consider all the items submitted and would next year hope to show that "the cock crows but the hen delivers the goods."

Promotion Examination Hardship to the Older Officer

But Conference, while generally supporting this suggestion, was not prepared to be quite so sweeping, and in response to an earnest appeal from C. R. GIBSON, **Bristol**, agreed to consider the **Sunderland** motion on the promotion examination, to which no fewer than 16 amendments had been submitted.

The motion called for amendment of Paragraph 28 of the Charter, which provides that a General Division officer shall not be eligible for promotion to a higher grade unless he has first passed the promotion examination to be established by the National Council, or secured the qualification of a recognised professional institute. Sunderland sought to modify this to the extent of excluding from its application all officers who, on April 1, 1946, had either completed 15 years' service or reached the age of 35. Moving the motion, G. LINDLEY said it was intolerable that officers with years of experience in the service and young men who had been in the Forces should be asked to pass a promotion examination which might have little relation to their work. Surely experience and knowledge acquired in years of service was a better passport for promotion from the lowest grade than an examination.

"Exempt the Pre-Chartists"

W. F. MCKEER, **St. Pancras**, wanted to go even further than Sunderland, and moved an amendment seeking exemption from the promotion examination for all who were in the service at the date of adoption of the Charter. His branch was particularly concerned at the plight of the young men who had returned to the General Division after five or six years with the Forces, and who found themselves unable to get promotion without study, for which they were now ill-suited.

E. L. RILEY, **N.E.C.**, while sharing the sympathy of delegates with the mature officer who was expected to qualify, pointed out that the Association was looking forward to a fully qualified service; and it was no use going to employers asking for improved conditions and higher rates of pay unless that could be offered in return. N A L G O had had an educational policy for 25 years, and he took a poor view of anybody under 35 who was not prepared to do something about his or her future (hear, hear!). At the age of 36 he had himself gone to Liverpool University to take a D.P.A. ticket, and he had never regretted it (cheers).

He would give an undertaking that the Examinations Board and the National Whitley Council would be asked to give exemption, or something in the nature of a "mature matric," to the mature officer: but he could offer no inducement to younger people that they would get away with it.

Ten-Year Limit Rejected

Conference rejected the amendment, whereupon L. W. JORDAN, **Darlington**, declared that Mr. Riley's words had compelled him to move his branch's amendment to extend the suggested exemption to officers aged 30 or with ten years' service on April 1, 1946. The ten-year limit would cover most of the men who had returned from the Forces having lost the best years of their studying life; while the exemption at 30 would remove a hardship on men who came into the service at a fairly advanced age without knowing that they would have to take an examination to get out of the General Division.

MR. RILEY, opposing this, pointed out that to exempt an officer after ten years' service would mean that many recruited between the ages of 16 and 19 during the years 1936-9 would be exempted, and it could not be seriously argued that a man was incapable of study at 26.

The amendment was defeated and all the remaining amendments were either withdrawn or rejected, leaving the way clear for the original motion. This Conference adopted, again in the face of N.E.C. opposition.

Having thus disposed of the promotion examination, delegates agreed to refer to the N.E.C. all the remaining Charter motions—dealing with such diverse matters as Saturday morning leave, recognition of examination successes, filling of vacancies, annual reports, annual leave, overtime, car allowances, testimonials, advertisement of posts, staff welfare, canteens, grading appeals, salaries of day nursery staff, and the speeding up of Whitley machinery. This lightened the agenda by 55 items, many of them, although of relatively minor importance, acutely controversial, thus offering a prospect, inconceivable before, that the agenda might be completed in time.

The discussion of the Charter thus concluded, the President judged the time appropriate to invite Conference to say farewell, in one capacity at least, to two prominent figures on the platform.

Tribute to "Teddy" Riley . . .

As most delegates knew, "Teddy" Riley had been appointed establishment officer at Liverpool, and had consequently found it necessary to resign his chairmanship of the staff side of the National Joint Council. Liverpool's gain would be N A L G O's loss, and a severe loss it would be. With HARRY ALLEN, Mr. Riley had been the driving force behind the long and difficult negotiations which led, in the first place, to the reconstitution of the National Council and, secondly, to the negotiation of the Charter. Since

The N.E.C. took many knocks, but really liked it.

its adoption, he had led the negotiations for its interpretation and improvement.

Mr. Riley's service to N A L G O had been one of outstanding distinction. Both sides of the National Joint Council would sadly miss both his shrewd and sound negotiating skill and his engaging personality; but the N.E.C. was, happily, not to lose him, and the previous evening, at the first meeting of the new Council, he had been unanimously appointed its chairman (cheers).

. . . and to A. G. Bolton

Conference, the President continued, had also to say farewell for a similar reason to A. G. BOLTON, who had been appointed establishment officer at Sheffield, and who had found it necessary, in consequence, to resign all his N A L G O offices. Mr. Bolton had been a member of the Council and a trustee of the Association for 19 years, thus had one of the longest records of continuous service. For many years a member of the old National Joint Council, he had sat on the reconstituted Council since its inception, and also on the Yorkshire provincial council, latterly as its chairman, and, since 1929, had been secretary of the Yorkshire district committee.

EXAMINATIONS BOARD
Assistant to Secretary Wanted

The Local Government Examinations Board invites applications for the post of Assistant to its Secretary. Salary APT.V National Scales. Applications, giving age, education, qualifications, experience, and two references to be submitted not later than August 16 to the Secretary, Local Government Examinations Board, 37 Upper Grosvenor Street, London, W.1.

An expert on the problems of nurses, he had been of outstanding service on the nurses' panel of the Rushcliffe Committee. Equally interested in the social side of N A L G O work he had, as a member and latterly as chairman of the special activities committee, played a great part in the development of the Association's holiday centres.

Replying, MR. RILEY, warmly thanked the President and Conference for the tribute paid him. He had had 25 years "in the game" of fighting for better conditions for local government officers, and had enjoyed every minute of it.

At Conference, the platform had certainly taken some knocks, but the N.E.C. really liked it. He himself enjoyed the battles of wit, and he knew that, deep down in their hearts, delegates bore the N.E.C. no grudge against the N.E.C. So long as the Council had the confidence of the membership, it would accept their criticisms. He was not leaving the Association, and although he was resigning his branch office, and from the National Joint Council, he saw nothing inconsistent with his joy in acting, in the interests of local government officers generally, on the N.E.C. (cheers).

MR. BOLTON also thanked the President and delegates, and expressed his gratitude to the N.E.C. and the Yorkshire district committee for the confidence they had shown in him throughout his long period of service. He would take many happy memories with him, and knew that N A L G O would go on from strength to strength (cheers).

CHIEF OFFICERS' SALARIES
Separate Whitley Machinery Plan

Before calling the next item on the agenda, the President invited F. H. HARROD to make a statement on behalf of the N.E.C. on paragraph 33 of the Annual Report, recording steps taken to establish machinery for the joint negotiation of the salaries and service conditions of chief officers. The constitutions of the National and Provincial joint councils, the Report explained, precluded them from determining the salaries and service conditions of clerks to local authorities and the salaries of other officers whose basic salary was over £700 a year. Some time ago, on learning that the local authority associations had been discussing the establishment of separate Whitley machinery for certain chief officers, the N.E.C. decided that, while its policy was that all local government officers should be within the purview of the National Joint Council, it would agree to the appointment of one or more internal panels of the N.J.C. each composed of representatives from both sides together with specially appointed representatives of the classes of officers concerned, with power to negotiate salaries and service conditions for N.J.C. approval.

Since that decision was reached, Mr. Harrod told delegates, the discussions had gone further. The employers' side of the N.J.C. had entered into informal conversations both with the associations of local authorities and with sectional bodies representing groups of the service, and had submitted proposals to the N.J.C.

While he was not yet able to disclose details he could say that these proposals raised the important issue of separate Whitley machinery to deal with the salaries and conditions of chief officers. The N.E.C. was prepared to agree to that course on the condition that N A L G O was represented on any new bodies which might be established. The Association embraced in its membership all ranks of local government officers, including at least 80 per cent. of all the senior officers in the service, and it therefore could not agree to the setting up of Whitley machinery for any section of the service from which it was excluded. At the same time, it fully recognised the position of sectional organisations representing groups of chief officers, and was prepared to discuss joint representation with such groups. He hoped that Conference would back the N.E.C. in that attitude. The loud and prolonged applause which greeted the statement made it clear that Conference would and did.

An Electricity J.I.C.

From chief officers, delegates turned to the problems of the services about to be nationalised. First, F. BAINBRIDGE, **N.E.C.**, accepted without debate an **East Ham** motion urging the N.E.C. to issue a comprehensive statement defining the machinery to be set up to deal with the new problems which would arise from the nationalisation of these services, including plans for joint negotiating councils.

Next, C. BARON, **Northmet**, moved a resolution asking that the Association's long-term policy in respect of Whitley machinery for the staffs of the electricity supply industry should be directed to the formation of one Whitley Council to cover the whole of the staffs—irrespective of whether they were at present municipal or company—with N A L G O, the Electrical Power Engineers' Association, and any other interested organisations representing their respective members.

New Equal Pay Call—With One Bold Dissentient

Today, Mr. Baron pointed out, there was one Whitley Council for the technical staffs of the whole industry, another for non-technical staffs of local authorities, and none at all for non-engineering staffs in the service of supply companies—with the result that one section was remunerated on the basis of output, another on the local government Charter, and a large proportion on the number of chimney pots on the roof or something like that! What was wanted was a single Whitley Council to cover the whole of the staffs, regardless of their type of service.

He knew that the Electrical Power Engineers' Association, which represented the staff on the National Joint Board, wanted to retain the present machinery on the ground that well-established arrangements should not be disturbed. Nevertheless, his branch disliked having an industry divided into watertight compartments, and considered that nationalisation provided an opportunity of instituting a more satisfactory arrangement.

E. L. RILEY replied that the N.E.C. would accept the motion, subject to the addition of the **Cornwall Electric Power** branch amendment. This, while supporting the motion as long-term policy, urged that, as a first step, N A L G O should try to form a Whitley Council for clerical, administrative and commercial staffs of company undertakings, such council to be enlarged later on the lines desired by Northmet. That, Mr. Riley explained, was the most urgent need—and they did not wish at this early stage to risk coming into conflict with other unions. Conference approved, adopting motion and amendment.

Charter Scales for Registrars

G. LEMMON, **Glasgow,** sought further information about the salaries of registrars of births, deaths and marriages, of whom the annual report quoted the Minister of Health as saying that they were employed neither by the Crown nor by local authorities, had their salaries fixed by schemes made under an Act of 1929, and could secure no increase without an amending scheme. The report added that the Minister had agreed that their salaries should be brought into line with Charter rates, and that the question had been referred to a sub-committee of the National Joint Council.

L. BEVAN, **N.E.C.,** replied that the N.J.C. sub-committee had agreed on recommendations, that the Registrar-General had generally approved them, and that they would shortly be coming back to the N.J.C. for formal adoption. To this, E. L. RILEY added the assurance that, as far as possible, registrars would be given full Charter salaries and conditions. In view of this assurance, **Southwark** branch referred to the Council its motion urging the N.E.C. to ensure that this was done.

Next, J. F. CONNOCK, **Bristol,** formally moved an instruction to the N.E.C. to ensure that provisions for the making-up of civil pay, similar to those contained in the Local Government Staffs (War Service) Act, 1939, be applied to service under the new National Service Act.

E. L. RILEY, **N.E.C.,** suggested that the motion be withdrawn, since the point had already been considered and rejected by the National Joint Council. He took the simple view that the making-up of pay in peace-time was a very different matter from making-up pay in time of war (hear! hear!). Bristol declining to withdraw the motion, Conference rejected it.

100 PER CENT TRADE UNIONISM
But No Enforced "Closed Shop"

There followed a brief debate on the "closed shop," opened by I. E. GINSBERG, **Stepney,** with a motion declaring:

"In the opinion of this Conference it is desirable that there should be 100 per cent. trade unionism amongst local government staff; and local authorities should urge all their staff to join an appropriate trade union; further, that this Conference recognises that while N A L G O is the appropriate organisation for local government officers, it also recognises that some officers belong to other trade unions and approves a policy of co-operation with such other unions."

This, Mr. Ginsberg emphasised, did not mean the closed shop. All it asked was that both N A L G O and the local authorities should urge all local government officers to belong to their appropriate organisation, on the ground that those who received benefits from collective bargaining should contribute to its success.

G. M. TERRY, **Kent County,** moving deletion of the words "and local authorities should urge their staff to join an appropriate trade union," said that his branch objected to the suggestion that trade unions should require local authorities to do their recruiting for them (hear! hear!). The branch wanted to see every local government officer a member of a trade union, and, naturally, it preferred that the union should be N A L G O; but at the same time it appreciated that there were other unions and that, where local government officers belonged to such unions, N A L G O should offer its co-operation.

R. WHITLAM, **Bermondsey,** seconding, declared that it was precisely because he was an ardent trade unionist that he opposed the Stepney motion. He wanted 100 per cent trade union membership,

"A woman uses a vocabulary of only 650 words—but what a turnover!"

but the task of securing that was one for the unions alone. If the employers were asked to do it, the next thing would be that they would be telling unions what they ought to do and telling employees what unions they should be in.

E. A. S. YOUNG, **N.E.C.,** asked Conference to support the amendment, which it did, subsequently adopting the motion as amended, whereupon **Airdrie** withdrew its motion calling for a "closed shop" with membership of a trade union made a condition of employment.

EQUAL PAY AND OPPORTUNITY
"Would Aid National Output"

It was with greater liveliness after this relatively dull patch that delegates roused themselves for what promised—and proved—to be one of the few good debates of the second day, that on equal pay. It arose on a motion by the **Scottish and Metropolitan district committees** and the **Glasgow, Bristol, Fulham, L.C.C.,** and **St. Pancras** branches, calling on Conference, in view of the favourable attitude of the Royal Commission, to:

(a) Urge the Government to adopt a policy of equal pay and equal opportunity for women in the civil service and to recommend adoption of this policy to local authorities and public undertakings;

(b) Urge the staff sides of the National Joint Councils of England and Wales and of Scotland to press immediately for the amendments necessary in the respective Charters; and

(c) Express the opinion that equal pay for women is an essential element in the nation's economic policy and, in the interests of both full production and justice, should be laid down by the Government as national policy.

Moving this, C. R. GIBSON, **Bristol,** declared that N A L G O had long supported equal pay as a measure of justice for its women members, and repudiated any suggestion that the support was given on sentimental grounds. But today, equal pay had become more than a matter of justice. It offered part of the solution for the nation's great economic problem of under-production. Recently, Sir Geoffrey Ince, Permanent Under-Secretary to the Ministry of Labour, had stated that 300,000 more women were needed in industry, of whom 100,000 were wanted in the clothing industry, and a further 100,000 in the textile trade. But it was unrealistic to expect women to go into industry if the Government would not "play ball" with them by backing a fair wage.

N A L G O should support the claim for equal pay for all women workers because its claim for its own members would gain added force if it were advanced in conjunction with others. If, as a result of equal pay, women went into industry and made extra goods, the risk of inflation would be reduced.

MISS M. TOWNSON, **Liverpool,** supporting, said that her main concern was for the women in the lower grades, who formed the bulk of N A L G O's women members. If the men feared a salary cut, these women had greater cause to fear it.

MISS B. THOMSON, **Glasgow,** warned delegates that if equal pay were not granted, the co-operative effort necessary to raise or even to maintain our present standards of living would fail. The country had not got the necessary manpower—in the strictly male sense—and woman power must be used to make up the numerical wastage caused by two wars. But this could be done only if women were paid the rate for the job. In the past, women had been diffident about taking professional and other examinations—but if equal pay and opportunity were adopted as national policy, they would be required to sit for examinations, formerly considered the prerogative of men, and the standard of service to the community would be enhanced.

"Time Not Opportune"

Then, to the astonishment and delight of Conference, there appeared a man with the courage to put an opposing view. He was H. JONES, **Cheshire County,** and he put his case with such force and wit as to keep delegates in a continuous ripple of laughter. Emphasising that he was speaking personally and not in the name of his branch, Mr. Jones suggested that Conference had not properly considered the implications of equal pay. It had allowed itself to be swayed by emotionalism, by oratory, by the spectre of inflation, by feminine charm, and, to some extent, by fear on the part of the married man of going home to his wife and telling her that he had voted against equal pay (laughter).

He opposed the motion because the time was not opportune. The cost of introducing equal pay into the civil service—though why N A L G O should want to bother with them he did not know—had been put at between £5,000,000 and £10,000,000. The cost in local government would be about £16,500,000 for teachers, between £7,000,000 and £8,000,000 for nurses, and about £750,000 for others. If the motion were successful, married men would be faced with the task of explaining to their wives, that because of the introduction of equal pay, the cost of goods in the shops had gone up, and to the ratepayers that the rates had gone up (cries of "Nonsense!").

Trousers—for Women Only!

Before N A L G O adopted equal pay as a policy, the wives of local government officers wore the trousers metaphorically; but since the adoption of that policy they were wearing them literally—as he could illustrate from personal experience, for, since his discharge from the Forces, he had had two suits on order for seven months, had entirely failed to find a pair of flannel trousers—but had been offered the nattiest range in women's slacks man could conceive (laughter).

Not long ago, the Archdeacon of Lewes was sent over to Germany to inquire why British boys were marrying German girls. He reported that there were three reasons—because German girls made good housewives; because the troops had not been very pleased with the attitude of British girls to Allied troops; and because there was no nonsense about equality amongst the Germans (cries of "No!").

He did not believe that women were equal to men, Mr. Jones concluded. In some respects they were superior; but in others inferior. There was still one indispensable service to the state which only a woman could perform, and in that respect women were supreme: but women were inferior in another and surprising respect. It had been ascertained that, whereas the average man used a vocabulary of about 1,300 words, the vocabulary of a woman was no more than half that. Only 650 words, but what a turnover! (laughter).

Need of Higher Family Allowances to Aid Married

T. FERNLEY, **Manchester,** was astonished to find such antediluvian specimens as the previous speaker in the ranks of N A L G O—yet he had noticed that Mr. Jones had appeared to get some slight support from the stone-age men on the platform (laughter).

A lot of male nonsense was talked about equal pay, most of it springing from resentment against women entering what was once an exclusively male preserve. Until equal pay was secured, he would feel inferior to women (cheers). From the purely selfish standpoint, equal pay should appeal to a man. His *amour propre* ought to be offended by unfair competition for his job by women at lower rates of pay. To those who argued that equal pay for women might cause men's rates to fall, he replied that if men's rates were being maintained at the expense of the women, then he did not desire to have it on his conscience that he had lived on a woman's earnings, or that he owed his standards to cheap female labour.

J. BAIRD, **Dunbartonshire,** said the case was a very simple one: women in the service today were doing the same work as men and carrying the same responsibility, and therefore they should be paid at the same rate. That was all there was to it.

Replying to the debate, C. R. GIBSON, urged Conference not to be stampeded by warnings of inflation. The source of inflation was the Treasury—the people who had for so long opposed equal pay. Mr. Jones had complained that he could not get flannel trousers. Well, there was only one way to remedy that defect—to get more women into industry by equal pay!

Conference adopted the motion, the N.E.C. refraining from any expression of opinion.

Call for "Positive Action"

The Council did, however, oppose the next, a **Blackpool** resolution calling upon it to initiate and take the lead in a nation-wide campaign for the implementation of equal pay for equal work and equality of opportunity.

Moving this, MISS E. K. HODSON said that women had been trying to get equal pay for 60 years. Now it was almost within grasp, and the time had come for positive action. The N.E.C. should launch a campaign, and seek the support of all other organizations working for the same end.

A. E. FITTON, **Blackpool,** supporting, pointed out that a pamphlet on equal pay published by N A L G O in 1943 ended with the words: "It is only by unity of effort that real progress will be made." The motion asked delegates to lead that unity of effort.

L. BEVAN, **N.E.C.,** opposing, told Conference that since the Royal Commission had reported, the N.E.C. had written to the Minister of Health urging the immediate adoption of equal pay in the local government service, and asking the Minister to receive a deputation, and had joined with the other members of the Joint Committee of Professional Organisations on Equal Pay in urging on the Prime Minister the immediate adoption of equal pay in the public service. There were many other campaigners in the field, and the Council took its share in their activities and was associated with practically every movement in the country aimed at securing equal pay. At the same time it was pressing the claim on the National Joint Council at every opportunity; for example, the proposals for the consolidation of salaries omitted all sex differentiation.

But the motion asked for more than this—it called on the Association to take the lead in a national campaign. To start yet another movement was neither necessary nor desirable, and it would involve heavy expense: therefore he urged Conference to endorse what the N.E.C. was already doing and reject the motion. Despite a further plea by MISS HODSON, Conference did so.

Bigger Grants for Children

That equal pay will have its repercussions was illustrated by the next motion, moved by P. ASHEN, **Birmingham.** This (as amended by **Barnsley,** the mover and Conference agreeing) called on Conference to press the Government for increased family allowances, inclusive of the first child, on the grounds that "the retention of married women in local government and civil service in itself, and in the event of equal pay for men and women will, to an even greater extent greatly affect the comparative living standards of officers of either sex with a dependent spouse with children; and that the retention of all classes of labour, male and female, will be essential for the maintenance of local government during the present emergency."

The object of the motion, Mr. Ashen explained, was to warn the Government of the danger that, in righting one long-standing injustice by introducing equal pay, it might perpetrate another and more serious injustice affecting family life.

Threat to the Family

In moving it, Birmingham was not trying to undermine equal pay, which it supported. But there were sincere men and women who, in the clash of equities—the rate for the job on the one hand and the protection of home providers on the other—would come down reluctantly against equal pay. There was no need for such a choice, since social legislation could restore the balance.

Family allowances were needed, rather than better salaries, because one could never equal two. A man with one child and a wife to keep would fair ill in a market of scarce goods when the childless couple, both earning, the spinster with her equal pay, or the bachelor, were shopping. And the spinster, bachelor, or childless couple could regard their contribution to the family allowance as an assurance that in their declining years there would be someone to translate their bank deposits into food, clothes, light, and heat.

Conference having rejected a **Stepney** amendment, opposed by the N.E.C., to limit the motion to a straightforward call for higher family allowances, T. D. BRADFORD, **Metropolitan district committee,** moved a simple alternative resolution: "That this Conference is of the opinion that the existing rate of family allowances is totally inadequate and that there is a need for an increase therein, including provision for the first child." The Metropolitan district, he explained, went a long way with Birmingham, but did not feel that the reasons it gave for its policy applied particularly to the local government service or to the civil service.

J. PEPPER, **N.E.C.,** having previously indicated that the Council supported the Metropolitan amendment, Conference adopted it in preference to the Birmingham motion.

BAN THE MARRIAGE BAR?

A Problem for Consideration

There followed another **Metropolitan district** motion, put by MISS C. L. GREEDUS, one of the newly-elected members of the N.E.C., instructing the N.E.C. to take immediate steps to secure in the Charter a clause banning the "marriage bar." Such a clause, Miss Greedus declared, would give a lead, through the National Joint Council, to all local authorities.

But F. TAYLOR, **St. Helens,** had grave doubts of the benefits such a lead would bring, and moved an amendment instructing the N.E.C. to reconsider the whole question and submit recommendations to the next Annual Conference. The retention or abolition of the marriage bar, Mr. Taylor argued, would have far-reaching importance in the future, and they should make no irrevocable decision without further examination. There were four reasons why it might be desirable to retain or impose a marriage bar:

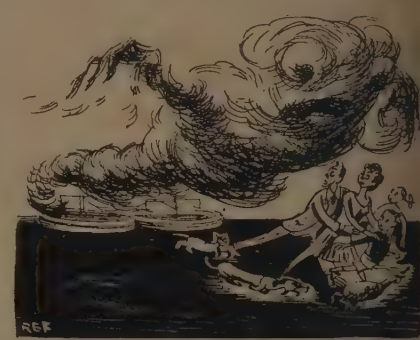
1. Its abolition would obstruct the promotion of women in the lower grades, who often had domestic responsibilities as heavy as many men.
2. It was difficult to reconcile the argument that women should have equal pay because they did work of equal value to that of men, with the claim that a married woman should be allowed to carry on two jobs; they should support the policy of one person one job when conditions became normal;
3. With local government in a state of flux, the retention of married women would accentuate the threat of redundancy; and
4. The growth of the double income was a growing threat to the value of money generally. He wanted the N.E.C. to consider the whole problem and urged branches and districts to do the same and to give the N.E.C. some indication of the feeling of the rank and file.

E. L. RILEY, **N.E.C.,** while generally favouring removal of the marriage bar, supported the amendment, arguing that the Council—which would have the problem of redundancy before it in the next six months—should be given a chance to consider all the implications. Conference agreed and adopted the amendment, whereupon **South Shields** withdrew its amendment calling for the imposition of a marriage bar save where there were extenuating circumstances or in the case of appointments applicable only to women.

Then came F. W. ALLEN, **Institute of Sewage Purification,** to conclude the day's proceedings in an atmosphere of Rabelaisian hilarity. Arising out of paragraph 53 of the Annual Report, telling of the work of the N A L G O Consultative Committee, a body which focuses the views of 36 sectional and professional societies, Mr. Allen wanted to know whether the N.E.C. had read the memorandum on salaries and emoluments submitted to it by the Institute of Sewage Purification.

The Institute claimed that sewage works managers should be allowed to regard their emoluments as compensation for the fact that most of them were compelled to live at the sewage works. Could Conference imagine a less salubrious place for one's home? Yet the sewage manager was compelled to live there so that he might be available at any time of the day or night in case anything went wrong—and it was surprising how often things did go wrong at a sewage works (laughter). The manager was deprived of all the amenities which his fellow officers enjoyed; he had to travel miles for his recreation (laughter); his wife had to travel miles for her shopping; and his children had a long way to go to school.

All these points were set forth in the Institute's memorandum, and he wanted Mr. Riley and Mr. Bevan to see whether the injustices suffered by sewage managers could not be remedied.



"Things often went wrong on a sewage farm."

W. BUCHANAN, **Glasgow,** another sewage works manager, warmly supported Mr. Allen. When he took on his job, he said, he was told, although he was a bachelor, that he must live in the house or forego the job. He wanted the job, so he took the house—but nobody would be happier than he to give it up. The sewage managers were a very small body but they had a right to have their voices heard in Conference. They were living in isolation, and working seven days a week.

Down Lover's Lane?

E. L. RILEY, **N.E.C.,** said he had gathered from the debate that, although sewage managers were a small body, they dealt with a fairly large problem (laughter). The whole question of emoluments was now under consideration on the staff side, and he hoped that the points they had made would be met. Nevertheless, there were certain compensations for life on a sewage farm. He understood that some Yorkshire sewage farms were in very nice surroundings and local boys and girls were known to walk in their direction on summer evenings (laughter).

This last remark brought S. M. SYKES, **Southport,** to his feet to tell Mr. Riley that, for once, he did not know what he was talking about: nobody visited a sewage works for pleasure. But sewage disposal was a vital factor in local government. In Southport he, as manager, had many worrying moments and long hours, owing to the fact that visitors put a great strain on the sewage system (laughter). It was time all the staff concerned were given a fair deal.

It was also five p.m., and at this point Conference adjourned, having first agreed to take the debate on T.U.C. affiliation as its first business next day. In two days it had disposed of 178 items on the agenda; but there were 104 still to be dealt with, and only six hours left.

N.E.C. to Explore 'Non-Political' T.U.C. Affiliation

It was before a packed Conference that the teams assembled next morning for yet another match in what has come to be an annual NALGO "Test" between those who are for and those who are against the Association's affiliation to the Trades Union Congress. But this time there was a change. On this occasion, the N.E.C. batted first, led by C. J. NEWMAN, the president-elect, who was heard in intense silence, unbroken by cheer or counter-cheer. The Council had secured first innings, not by "winning the toss" as Mr. Newman claimed, but by abandoning the firmly negative and anti-affiliation stand it has taken hitherto and tabling a positive motion—that it be "authorised to explore the possibility of affiliation to the Trades Union Congress on a basis mutually acknowledged to be solely industrial and not implying allegiance to nor connection with any political party," and be required to make definite recommendations to Conference next year.

Mr. Newman knocked most of the stuffing out of the bowling in the first over by flatly denying the charge that the motion was merely another delaying device and the N.E.C. did not really mean it. "Had the N.E.C. wanted to go further, it could not have done so, because hitherto Conference itself had always voted against affiliation. In the face of those votes, the N.E.C. could do no more than seek authority to explore the matter—and it was for Conference to say whether that further step should be taken.

"A Definite Step Forward"

The motion, he assured Conference, was a definite step forward. The minds of the N.E.C. had moved, and he hoped that the minds of delegates had moved also, and that they had not come pledged to vote in one particular way. They were the grand jury of NALGO, and they should not give a verdict before they had heard the facts.

To him, the issue centred on the political implication of affiliation. If that could be got out of the way, he personally would be in favour of affiliation (cheers). Public opinion would expect NALGO as a body of public servants to get the assurances for which the motion asked, and he believed that it would get them. It was completely untrue that affiliation automatically involved a political levy. Of the 194 unions in the T.U.C. only 61, or one-third of the number, were affiliated to the Labour Party. Therefore, the question under discussion was whether NALGO should affiliate to an industrial organisation, and not whether it should affiliate to a political party.

He thought that the Association ought to take twelve months to consider so important an issue—but on the clear understanding that, after that time, it must be settled one way or the other. That would be the time to bring up amendments. He was anxious, if NALGO was going into the T.U.C., to take it there as a united body, not as a rump of the Association. But they were not yet united. The N.E.C. itself was sharply divided, and the motion had reached the agenda only by a narrow majority. Conference itself was divided.

"Can Make Us—Or Break Us!"

NALGO was the only trade union in the country, possibly in the world, which embraced all ranks. For more than 40 years they had been practising industrial democracy—not bosses and staffs, but all colleagues in the one association. That was a rare plant, but it promised a rich harvest in the future, and he begged delegates not to destroy it. It was the complete answer to class warfare. It was the British way of doing things. Local government officers were workers, and should be linked with other workers.

"I want to see NALGO leave the side stream it is now in," Mr. Newman declared, "and sail with colours flying into the main stream of industrial reorganisation. What are those colours? A bit of red, two shades of blue, and a thin white stripe—the latter, I suppose, symbolising the blameless life of the local government officer. But red, white and blue represent our national union, and that is what I want to preserve in our Association. I appeal to delegates to think of the unity of NALGO in considering this issue—an issue so momentous that it can make us or break us. Which shall it be?"

F. L. RILEY, N.E.C., earned an enthusiastic cheer by formally seconding, leaving it to G. O.

"If the political issue can be got out of the way, I, personally, am in favour of affiliation"—C. J. NEWMAN

PARKHURST, Islington, to move the first amendment in the names of Airdrie, Easington, Fulham, Glasgow, Halifax, Islington, St. Pancras, and West Ham, calling for immediate affiliation. Conference, he argued already knew that there were no political implications whatsoever in affiliation—and he was not so unsophisticated as to believe that the N.E.C. thought there were.

The real reason delegates to successive Conferences had been afraid to join the T.U.C. was because they did not believe that they were the same sort of workers as other people (cries of "No!"). Yet when they were in the T.U.C. they would be in good company, alongside airline pilots, doctors, scientists, actors, and other clerks. Last year, Conference had opened the ranks of NALGO to all administrative staffs of the new corporations. In other words, the Association was after the potential membership of trade unions affiliated for many years to the T.U.C. That was why the N.E.C. was worried . . . but Mr. Parkhurst's peroration was drowned by the impatient tattoo of delegates' feet, and he was forced to leave the rostrum.

"Political Bogey Exploded"

He was followed by F. H. NEWMAN, West Ham, who confessed profound shock on seeing the N.E.C. motion, which implied that although affiliation had been a major issue at Conference for many years, the N.E.C. had never investigated its implications, and that all its earlier pronouncements had been made without any inquiry.

For how much longer would the bogey of political affiliation be dragged up? It was exploded by the fact that, while the T.U.C. claimed 8,000,000 affiliated trade unionists, the Labour Party claimed only 2,500,000 of them as its members. Affiliation to the T.U.C. and the Labour Party were quite separate.

His branch, in supporting the amendment, wanted to give to, rather than take from, the general field of trade unionism. Nevertheless, there was a link between the salaries of local government officers and the wages of manual workers and skilled craftsmen: and NALGO would be in a stronger bargaining position were it in the T.U.C.

R. WHITLAM, Bermondsey, supporting, denounced the motion as a "stinking red herring." He suspected that those who wanted to keep NALGO pure from the taint of politics had more political bias than those who favoured affiliation. If Conference wanted to succeed in matters of high policy, it must use the instrument next in power to the Government—the T.U.C. NALGO could give the T.U.C. much good advice—for the T.U.C. was not always right.

It was significant of the sham fight atmosphere of the debate as a whole that, although a year ago Conference rejected affiliation, this year only one opponent found his way to the microphone. He was J. S. BLACKLEDGE, Hitchin, and he made a strong plea for rejection of both amendment and motion. Members, he averred, were getting tired of the hardy annual which had been turned down time after time. It was playing with fire. In his opinion, affiliation would lead to wholesale resignations (cries of "Shame!")—resignations of people whose guidance the Association needed. Why could not NALGO be master in its own house? History had proved that, so long as its demands were reasonable, it could secure them unaided.

R. J. HILL, Fulham, supporting the amendment, pointed out that unions which fought the early struggles to improve conditions were now strongly united with the T.U.C., and NALGO was picking the fruits of their work. The voice of NALGO's 150,000 members, which should have been heard at Congress, was reduced, by non-affiliation, to an inaudible whisper in the T.U.C. advisory committee on local government, on which NALGO was represented.

M. MORGAN, South Wales District, last year's champion for affiliation, said that his district had viewed the N.E.C.'s motion with suspicion, based on experience, but he welcomed Mr. Newman's statement. It did show that the Canutes on the platform had got their feet wet and were preparing to withdraw (laughter). What had changed in the past twelve months? The T.U.C. had not changed, nor had NALGO—but the country as a whole had: it knew that the future was "work or want."

The solitary opponent of affiliation that morning had given a warning, but he took a poor view of an attempt to intimidate Conference by a threat of resignations and splitting the Association. South Wales would continue loyally to abide by the Association, whether inside the T.U.C. or not (cheers). He hoped that delegates would agree that the time was ripe to join the T.U.C. now; but if they would not, he hoped they would vote for the N.E.C. resolution and come back again next year prepared to go in as one united body.

Two Essential Conditions

R. M. WILLIAMS, National Association of Local Government Welfare Officers, told Conference that, while his Association opposed affiliation, his branch, Liverpool, had instructed him to support the N.E.C. motion. He would do the latter with a clear conscience, because he believed that the N.E.C. wanted affiliation "without all the undesirable features connected with it." It should be possible for local government officers to work with their fellow trade unionists on a national level, but he wanted to be sure of two things: that he would continue to be a non-political servant of the public; and that the specialist problems of the local government officer would be put by representatives who understood those problems, and not by bank managers or engineers.

T. FERNLEY, Manchester, calling for an immediate decision, urged that the political problem could be settled now. NALGO could no more avoid politics than it could avoid old age.

"Canutes on the N.E.C. had got their feet wet."

Mr. Fernley was prepared to continue, but Conference, which had evidently made up its mind before the debate began, was weary of further talk and insisted on a vote, which defeated the amendment by a big majority.

Doncaster's amendment, moved by A. A. GUY, calling for a ballot on the result of the N.E.C.'s inquiries before next Conference, was likewise rejected, after E. A. S. YOUNG, N.E.C. had pointed out that it would deprive branches of hearing the views of their delegates and of the N.E.C. members charged with the inquiry.

Ministry Pledge of Compensation for P. A. Officers

H. BRAMWELL, **Newcastle-upon-Tyne,** next introduced an amendment to extend the motion by authorising the N.E.C. also to explore the possibility of affiliation with "kindred organisations with like interests to N A L G O." Although this was put forward as an addition to the motion, Mr. Bramwell made it clear that he regarded it rather as an alternative. If the N.E.C. found that it could not affiliate to the T.U.C. without political implications, this offered another way of attaining their objects. Their work gave local government officers common interests with doctors, lawyers, accountants, bankers, civil servants, civil engineers, and all other professional, administrative, and technical associations: therefore, it was in the interests of N A L G O that, while retaining its freedom of action, it should associate with those of kindred outlook, and even explore the possibility of forming some sort of federation with them. As a nation, we must work as a team. What was the value of a ship's stoker without the navigator, or the miner without the surveyor? Let association with other professional bodies be done in the widest possible sense and not with one section only.

Supporting, H. H. STANBRIDGE, **Epsom and Ewell,** asked if it was likely that N A L G O would cut any ice in the councils of so large an organisation as the T.U.C. He thought it would receive scant consideration. But Conference agreed with E. A. S. YOUNG, **N.E.C.,** that adoption of the amendment "would only confuse the issue," and rejected it.

All other amendments were withdrawn, leaving Conference to a straight vote on the N.E.C. motion. Before it was put, Mr. Newman reminded delegates that the N.E.C. was asking for a mandate, and the strength of a mandate depended on the size of the majority backing it: he therefore asked Conference to give the N.E.C. that unity which a substantial majority would show. This it did—on a show of hands without demonstration and without even a demand for a card vote—thus taking N A L G O nearer affiliation than it has yet been, after the calmest and one of the shortest debates ever held on this subject.

NALGO AND E.P.E.A.
A Criticised Agreement

Going back to the earlier items on the agenda left on one side for the T.U.C. debate, C. BARON, **Northmet,** rose to withdraw his branch's motion calling for cancellation of the agreement between N A L G O and the Electrical Power Engineers' Association, on the ground that it refused N A L G O membership to certain electricity officers who were not members of the E.P.E.A., and recommending, in its place, the inclusion in Association and branch rules of a clause to the effect that their functions should not extend to the salaries and conditions of technical staffs coming within the purview of the National Joint Board for the Electricity Supply Industry except by mutual agreement between the Association and the organisation(s) concerned.

The electricity company branches, Mr. Baron declared, stood by the motion, many reporting that dozens of members were on the point of resignation and many potential members were being lost as a result of the agreement with the E.P.E.A., which was "misguided in conception, wrong in principle, and thoroughly bad in effect." Since, however, good relations between N A L G O and the E.P.E.A. were important at a time when the industry was in the melting-pot, he was prepared to withdraw the motion, at the same time insisting that the N.E.C. took all steps possible to meet the criticisms that had been raised.

Also withdrawn—for a different reason—was the **Metropolitan District** motion calling for more strenuous and widespread public relations activities including: "a further individual approach" to local authorities which had not yet set up public relations machinery; the appointment of public relations officers by all districts and branches; and the organisation by county branches of joint campaigns. Explaining why he was withdrawing the motion, L. G. SIRETT, **Hendon,** chairman of the Metropolitan district public relations committee, said that they had hoped for a "full-dress" debate, but it was obvious that Conference was not "in the mood" for that. Conference agreed—with the result that amendments, including one to bring the Association's public relations policy up to date "in view of the present trend towards change in local government" fell.

C. D. TURBAYNE, **St. Marylebone,** contented himself with formally moving that Conference, deploring the widespread ignorance of local government, should request the Minister of Education, as a means of fostering a greater

"Conference was not in the mood for a debate on public relations."

sense of citizenship, to include the study of civics in the school curricula of all children at the most suitable age.

Seconding, A. S. ROBERTS, **Holborn,** complained that not much had been heard at this Conference about education, but urged the Association to adopt a more vigorous and progressive policy, both amongst its members and in the world at large. If, today, children were educated in the science of citizenship, tomorrow there would be an enlightened public, enlightened councils, and an enlightened world.

Films on Civic Education

J. PESTER, **Dewsbury,** moved an amendment calling on the N.E.C. to consider, in addition, the production of a high-quality film—to which R. CARR, **Middlesbrough,** added the point that acceptance of the motion should lead to more vigorous campaigns against things they knew should not exist.

E. H. MASON, **chairman of the N.E.C. public relations committee,** welcomed the motion, but warned delegates that a good film today cost between £3,000 and £5,000 for every ten-minute reel. It was thus beyond N A L G O's means to make one—but Gaumont-British Instructional was already making twelve films on civic education, and had consulted Headquarters on their production. Conference saw the point and rejected the amendment, whilst approving the motion.

Again, no doubt, with an eye on the clock (it was 10.55 a.m., with four hours to go and 84 items to be dealt with), **Salford** withdrew its motion censuring the editor of LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE for expressing in the editorial columns views which, the motion alleged, did not accord with the Association's policy; expressing the view that editorial comment should faithfully reflect that policy; and calling on the N.E.C. to ensure that in future it did so. But the withdrawal was not complete, Salford's delegate qualifying it with the comment that the branch would hold it over for twelve months, thus in effect putting the editor on probation, with sentence suspended.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE STAFFS
A Ministry Assurance

Of greater moment to many was the N.E.C. motion, moved by P. H. HARROLD, hon. solicitor for England, viewing with grave concern the prospect of the diminution of the public assistance functions of local authorities as a result of the National Insurance Act, 1946, and the absence of provisions for the transfer and compensation of officers likely to become redundant; and calling upon the Government to introduce the National Assistance Bill as early as possible this session.

Since the motion was tabled, Mr. Harrold told delegates, there had been some change. The Ministry of Health had told the N.E.C. that a Bill to wind up the public assistance functions of local authorities would be introduced next session; that a survey was being made of public assistance staffs (between 2,000 and 3,000) to see how far it was possible for them to be absorbed either by local authorities or by the new national insurance organisation; and there was to be adequate provision for compensation for those likely to be affected.

While Conference might accept these statements as reasonably satisfactory, there were other matters which were not so satisfactory. They had received no assurance that public assistance officers were to be given priority consideration for transfer to posts in the new service—though the N.E.C. had been told that there would be some sort of statutory preference with regard to work on which such officers were engaged. He therefore asked Conference to adopt the motion, at the same time accepting the amendments of the **Eastern, North-Western and North Wales and Southern district committees** and the **Isle of Ely** branch, urging the inclusion in the Assistance Bill of satisfactory transfer or compensation provisions, and of the **Lancashire county** branch, seeking for public assistance staffs prior claim for transfer to the new posts, and instructing the N.E.C. to fight for that end with "widest publicity" and by "any other steps."

R. RILEY, **Manchester,** moved an amendment calling, in addition to satisfactory transfer or compensation provisions, for legislation to require local authorities to absorb their own redundant officers who could neither be transferred nor satisfied with the compensation offered.

Supporting, C. A. SMALLMAN, **Birmingham,** pointed out that what Manchester wanted today Birmingham had done yesterday. In response to an approach from the branch, the city council had promised to absorb as many of the redundant staff as it could. Such action was needed, since the Government would not be willing to absorb all public assistance officers.

Opposing, Mr. Harrold pointed out that if total absorption were made the duty of the local authority there would be no case for compensation claims—since nobody would be displaced. The N.E.C. would urge on local authorities the need to absorb their own staffs as far as practicable, but did not wish it to be made an obligation.

Conference, however, adopted the amendment after R. M. WILLIAMS, **Liverpool,** had drawn attention to the Government statement that it would be largely dependent upon local authorities to employ or compensate their officers. If that was the Government's policy, then absorption should be obligatory.

"Jobs Wanted, Not Compensation"

After **Berkshire** had withdrawn its amendment calling on the N.E.C. to adopt a "more forceful and positive policy," G. B. CREDLAND, **Sheffield,** moved an amendment seeking provisions to assure that officers absorbed should retain their salary, status and seniority.

It was disgusting, he declared, that only twelve months before public assistance staffs "packed up," their position was still not defined. They did not want compensation, but a job. In the war between central and local government over who should be responsible for giving them that job, the Government would win. If that happened, and local authorities were obliged to absorb them, then they should have their seniority and status preserved. The N.E.C. accepted this claim, and so also did Conference.

All other amendments having been withdrawn, MR. HARROLD, replying to the debate, claimed that the N.E.C. had pursued a go-ahead and active policy. It had been on its initiative that representatives of public assistance officers were called together, and it was because of the action it had taken that the N.E.C. had been able to make the satisfactory announcement it had made about the forthcoming legislation. Conference approved the motion as amended.

It also approved, without debate, a **Lancashire county** motion protesting against the Government's "failure to recognise the justice and equity of the claims by public assistance staffs to posts in the new Ministry," [H. SAUNDERS, **South Eastern,** taking the opportunity to praise the N.E.C. because it had supplied what the rank and file wanted—action. Members should have confidence in the joint committee working on the matter, Mr. Saunders added. Expressing disappointment at the failure to obtain any assurances on absorption of redundant officers, he declared that one of the dangers to public assistance staffs was from within the service, rather than from outside. He appealed both to in-

Superannuation Amendments – Legislation Hope

ntial members of the Association to receive blic assistance officers into their departments, l to the officers themselves to look to A L G O and their sectional associations.

Delegates turned next to the annual crop of ded-for improvements of the Superannuation s. First came a claim by **Woolwich**, moved A. G. SALISBURY, for an immediate effort to ain, as soon as possible, a pension for the low of an officer. This was a long-standing im, Mr. Salisbury said, and his branch was ncerned that, although it had been repeatedly epted by Conference, no active steps had been en to secure its acceptance by the Governnt. Yet the need was urgent—and if certain ople in Italy started to send letters to the Town ll, it might become *very* urgent ! (laughter).

t often happened that, when an officer died ore becoming entitled to a pension, his widow

NALGO Wants Assistant District Officers

NALGO may shortly appoint several Assistant District Officers (men or women). Salary £420 - £15 - £465 plus bonus and £20 for London appointments. Travelling expenses and reasonable subsistence. The posts are superannuable.

Duties include representing the Association at meetings and before local authorities. Organising experience and ability in public speaking are essential and knowledge of local government is desirable.

Applications with particulars of age, education, qualifications, NALGO and other experience, and names of three referees, must reach the General Secretary, NALGO, 24 Abingdon Street, London, S.W.1. by September 6, 1947; envelope endorsed "Assistant District Officer". Testimonials should not accompany application. Canvassing will disqualify.

s left with nothing but her husband's contributions plus the interest—and since superannuan was not made mandatory until 1937, many icers with long service had contributed for ten ars only. The widow thus had to exist on refund of contributions and on savings if ving had been possible on the low salaries of past or the high prices of the present.

His branch knew that there were many difficulin obtaining amending legislation, but felt at the time had come when that proposal, ecting so vitally the welfare of officers and their pendants, should be pressed to success.

E. J. REPPER, **West Cornwall**, moved an amendent to extend the right to pensions to the dependent relative" should an officer die a chelor or widower leaving a dependent mother daughter.

overnment Hint

For the N.E.C., P. H. HARROLD agreed that it as time something was done. They had been essing the Government throughout seven years war and two years of congested legislation, but e reply had always been that there was no time. ecently, however, there had been an indication at there might be a possibility of legislation aling with certain superannuation enactments, d the N.E.C. was making every effort to see at that included an amendment of their own perannuation Act. He accepted the motion d the West Cornwall amendment.

Next, B. SHAW, **Lindsey county**, invited Conrence to ask the Government to make the plication of the Local Government and Civil rvice Rules a statutory requirement, thus suring that a local government officer transrred to the civil service would carry his pension ghts with him. To this J. K. BIGGERS, **Edinrgh**, moved an amendment demanding that ansfer of superannuation rights between local overnment and the civil service should be autoatic, and a transfer value paid on lines laid own in the Transfer Value Regulations, 1939.

Again accepting both motion and amendment, R. HARROLD told delegates that the Association d already asked that the Rules should apply tomatically to all local authorities and on all ansfers from the local government to the civil rvice ; that transferred officers should not lose perannuation rights ; and that transfer value ould be paid and pensions calculated according salary and service at retirement. Those proosals had been accepted by the associations of cal authorities and the Treasury had agreed to give effect to them by legislation—but, as usual, could not say when Parliamentary time could be found.

From superannuation, Conference turned to the future of electricity department staffs when their activities are nationalised. First, F. LEBENTZ, **Walthamstow**, called on the N.E.C. to press that all staff needed for the new Central Electricity Authority and Area Boards shall be recruited from existing local government and electricity supply company staffs. The motion had been drafted, Mr. Lebentz explained, before the N.E.C., in the June number of LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE, had given details of its discussions with the Minister of Fuel and Power. If his branch could be assured that adequate provisions were to be made in the Electricity Bill, it would be satisfied. But the provisions must be adequate. The interests of the public would be best served if members of all classes of the staffs of the old order—to whom the great undertakings owed their efficiency—were recruited to the new organisation and given the job of maintaining and improving it. They included men and women with initiative, qualifications, and business ability, and it was they who should be entrusted with the administration and development of the electricity services of the future.

For the N.E.C. P. H. HARROLD welcomed the motion as being likely to strengthen the Council when next it went to the Minister, and Conference thereupon approved it.

In view of the Minister's assurances, R. ADAMS, **Wimbledon**, agreed that his branch's motion demanding inclusion in the Electricity Supply Bill of provisions to safeguard the interests of existing employees be referred to the N.E.C., and this course Conference approved. **Brentford and Chiswick** having withdrawn its amendment calling for terms not less favourable than those provided by the 1939 Superannuation Act and the Electricity Supply Act, 1926,

EXAMINATION BOARD
"Should Consult Districts!"

There followed a lively little debate on a **Chelmsford Borough** branch motion (to which the mover incorporated a **Sleaford and Kesteven** amendment) viewing with alarm the "increasing tendency of the N.E.C. to formulate policy and put it into operation without consulting district committees" ; and in particular suggesting that the Local Government Examinations Board should circulate its draft proposals to district committees for their observations before adoption.

Moving this in a speech curtailed by the atmosphere of increasing haste and urgency, MISS A. M. KIRKPATRICK assured Conference that Chelmsford did not oppose examinations, neither did it depreciate the value of qualifications. But it did want to see experience, ability, and work given equal status with examination prowess and qualifications in jobs for which qualifications were not essential.

Although Miss Kirkpatrick had not touched on the first part of the motion, it offered a temptation which J. P. PHOENIX, **North Western District**, could not resist. He objected to the suggestion that the N.E.C. should be viewed "with alarm—" with "distaste," perhaps, but not with "alarm" ! (laughter). He was not one of those who criticised the N.E.C. He had a great respect for it. It was a great institution. But it should not refer its policies to districts, because that would make future Conferences even longer, and possibly duller, than the present one ! It was better, and much more fun, to tell the N.E.C. what to do *at* Conference. The N.E.C., he thought, would go far on its own ; it certainly *should* go far (laughter). It was now the incubator for the establishment officer class ! (laughter).

E. L. RILEY, replying for the N.E.C., told how, the previous night, he had been turning over in his mind the debate on the five-day working week and it had then occurred to him that if the Lord, when creating the world, had decided on a five-day week, Mr. Phoenix would never have been at Conference ! (laughter). But the N.E.C. could not refer the proposals of the Examinations Board to district committees. The Board was an entirely independent body, appointed by the National Whitley Council. It had submitted its draft syllabus to a body of experts and, in good trade union fashion, paid fees for advice. But N A L G O was not concerned with its detailed working.

On the wider issue raised by the motion, Mr. Riley pointed out that in N A L G O, Conference was the policy-forming body, and the N.E.C. was appointed to put that policy into effect—although, as was to be expected, it did sometimes initiate policy. The N.E.C. itself was well-informed on opinion throughout the Association in all parts of the country, and he therefore, asked Conference to reject the motion. Conference agreed.

B & O FUND GRANTS
Family Allowance Cut

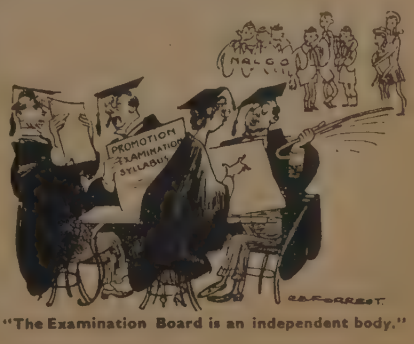
Responding to a plea from A. S. ROBERTS, **Holborn**, that the education committee should face the future with a vigorous and active policy, A. E. ODELL, its chairman, assured Conference that that was precisely what it intended to do. Then, after **Lindsey County** had withdrawn its motion that Benevolent Fund grants should always be higher than public or national assistance scales, T. D. BRADFORD, **Metropolitan district**, moved that family allowances be disregarded altogether in assessing such grants. His committee, he declared, had been shocked to find that the Benevolent and Orphan Fund was including the family allowances received by a widow as part of her "income," and reducing grant accordingly. Hardship could not be solved by arithmetic. Each case must be treated as a separate human problem, and he submitted that all members contributing to their great Fund wanted it to give as generously as possible.

R. T. SHEARS, **N.E.C.**, replied that his committee had considered the Family Allowances Act in 1945 and had given all beneficiaries an extra five shillings a week from January 1, 1946, without waiting until the Act became operative. If, in calculating grants, all expenditure were taken into account, then all income had to be taken into account, too, to ensure uniformity of treatment ; otherwise, if family allowances were ignored, a few beneficiaries would be better off than others. In addition to grants, the Fund paid a clothing allowance every half-year, sent children to the seaside every summer, and sent a grant at Christmas, which increased year after year. He asked Conference to reject the motion.

N. G. SMITH, **Stretford**, also opposing, said that the mover of the motion had tried to play on the feelings of delegates and to infer that the Benevolent and Orphan Fund Committee was like Scrooge in "A Christmas Carol." When the Committee considered applications for grants, it must treat all applicants equally. If family allowances were to be disregarded, there was no reason why a widow's pension should not be disregarded, too. Conference agreed, rejected the motion and, having disposed of the last of the items on the Annual Report, went off in search of lunch.

When delegates reassembled, it was in the happy atmosphere of post-prandial bonhomie that W. T. JARVIS, **Leatherhead**, moved the customary vote of thanks to the honorary officers and other members of the N.E.C. for their work during the year. Delegates, he said, were proud of the N.E.C., and rightly so. Members put them there, and they were returned year after year with just sufficient change to nurture a wonderful spirit of democracy. The Council worked as a team, and having seen its team-work in operation, he knew it to be excellent (loud cheers).

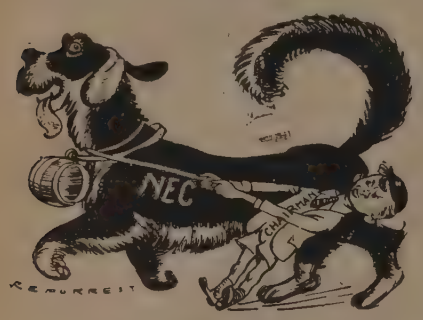
Replying, E. A. S. YOUNG said that it had been his privilege to sit in the chair of the N.E.C. at its Saturday afternoon meetings for more than four



"The Examination Board is an independent body."

Claim to Voice in Framing Whitehall Staff Regulations

years. That had meant getting into the chair at ten o'clock in the morning and not leaving it till five or six in the evening (if he was lucky !)—and he sometimes took the same view of the N.E.C. as delegates took of it at Conference (laughter). He felt like the small boy who, seen walking along with a piece of string attached to a St. Bernard, and asked where he was taking the dog, replied : "I don't know ; I've not asked him yet where he wants to go ! " (laughter). But the N.E.C. appreciated the thanks of Conference (cheers).



Mr. Young did not always know where they were going.

E. L. RILEY intervened to say how much the N.E.C. had appreciated the work of Ernest Young over the past four years. He had presided over the Council during what had probably been the four most difficult years in its experience—two at the end of the war and two of "semi-peace." Now he was being elevated to a higher plane, and Conference and N.E.C. alike would be lacking if they did not say how much they were indebted to him (cheers).

Having adopted the Annual Report, delegates settled down purposefully to dispatch the 49 remaining motions and amendments in some 90 minutes. First, P. PAXTON, **Nottingham,** moved an amendment of rules to empower Conference to order a ballot of members, of which the result should be binding on the Association.

Opposing, A. E. ODELL, **N.E.C.,** quoted Counsel's opinion to the effect that Conference already had the power desired : it could order a ballot at any time, and prescribe beforehand that action be taken on its result, without any amendment of rules. The N.E.C. opposed any specific provision, since it might lead to the belief that all important issues should be referred to ballot—and he was sure that that was not the wish of Conference, which was competent to act in a fully representative capacity on behalf of members. Such a skilful combination of logic and flattery proved too much for the ballotomanes and Conference rejected the motion.

TRADES COUNCIL AFFILIATION

No Permission—Yet—for Glasgow

Next came A. BLUE, **Glasgow,** with a request that his branch be allowed to affiliate to the Glasgow Trades Council and, in the meantime, to appoint observers to it. Glasgow, he claimed, with its 3,000 members, was not irresponsible, and it believed such affiliation to be in its interests. The only conceivable objections—that the Trades Council was political, or semi-political, and that agreement with other trades unions would clash with the spirit of public service—he answered with an emphatic "No." The Trades Council was not a political body ; it was distinct and separate from the Labour Party. Nor was it an executive body ; therefore, its decisions were not binding on constituent members.

T. SPENCE, **Dunbartonshire,** complained that Conference had not yet had a true picture of the position of the National Joint Council in Scotland. It was not the same set-up as the English Council. N A L G O had only 50 per cent of the staff-side seats (compared with 77 per cent on the English Council), and policy formed at the local level had a bearing on the Council's work. If they, as individuals, got into the Trades Council in Glasgow, information of great help to the J.I.C. would be available.

N A L G O policy was never mentioned in the local newspaper, and when he asked a reporter why, he was told : "N A L G O is not a registered trade union—it is only a certified one." Again, the Trades Council sent representatives to sit on local tribunals—but how many members had ever represented N A L G O on such bodies ? He believed that he was the only one.

E. A. S. YOUNG, N.E.C., replying, pointed out that it was only two years since Conference had made the rule to prohibit the Association and any district committee or branch from affiliating to any organisation associated directly or indirectly with any political party, save with the consent of Conference. He suggested that Conference should withhold its consent until the T.U.C. affiliation issue had been dealt with, and with this view Conference agreed, rejecting the Glasgow motion and accepting the withdrawal of a subsequent one by **Airdrie,** to allow any branch which wishes to do so to apply for affiliation to its local trades council.

MINISTRY STAFF REGULATIONS

Right to Consultation Claimed

Scotland still held the rostrum, and the **Scottish district committee** and **Edinburgh** branch next invited Conference, "in view of the increasing tendency of H.M. Government to include in public statutes clauses giving powers to central departments to make regulations governing the conditions of appointment and service of local government officers," to instruct the N.E.C. to secure through its parliamentary agents a statutory right of consultation for staff organisations before the issue of such regulations. Moving this, I. V. WARNER, **Edinburgh,** instanced the Health Services (Scotland) Bill, in which the Secretary of State sought power to regulate the conditions and superannuation of officers of health and education authorities, and the Local Government (Scotland) Bill, in which powers were sought to regulate the qualifications of financial officers—a policy which, although possibly adopted at the request of an organised body of officers, might lead to the victimisation of the unorthodox and the exclusion of pioneers in new methods. Unless precautions were taken, extension of these powers to other branches of the service might lead to the creation of a series of "closed shops," with strictly-regulated entry and bars on promotion. In obtaining the right to be consulted about such proposals, the Association would be in a better position to control developments inimical to the general membership.

It was easier to secure the amendment of a draft proposal than to oppose the bill in Parliament, when political considerations might be involved. Moreover, the danger of delay in consulting members once rules had been published, and in securing agreed amendments during the short period allowed for opposition was too great to be risked.

J. K. BIGGERS, **Edinburgh,** supporting, agreed that delegates must support the proposal, as seeking only fundamental justice, whether they deplored centralisation or believed that central or regional services were more efficient. If the Government decided to interfere with their livelihood, it should consult them first. The N.E.C. might hesitate to ask for a statutory right, but why not "have a go"?

"Inexperienced Outsiders"

J. M. ASHWORTH, **Education Officers' National Association,** said that education welfare departments were concerned, in view of the Home Office threat to control them as a result of the recommendation of the Curtis Committee. Much harm could be done when inexperienced people from outside interfered in welfare. In illustration, he cited the example of two women, appointed straight from the university, without any previous experience, who had to board out children in towns of which they knew nothing. One rejected one applicant to take a boarder because the furnishing of the house was not up to standard : the other put a girl of 13 in a lavishly furnished place, yet the first place had always been satisfactory, but the second was let out in rooms; the occupier did not own a stick of the expensive furniture and was drunk every night, and the police were often called in. The child placed there ran away. The education welfare officer knew, but was not consulted.

P. H. HARROLD, **N.E.C.,** said that cases of the kind cited by Mr. Ashworth should be sent to Headquarters, for it to give publicity to them. The Council entirely agreed with the object of t motion, but could not accept its form, sir there was no known way of securing such a ri through parliamentary agents. Conference agre to refer the motion to the N.E.C.

RATING REFORM

Higher Grants Urged

Glasgow returned to the rostrum to mo what its proposer, A. M. R. LANE, claimed to "the first item on the agenda showing a concern for local government's relation with t public." It was a motion—to which Mr. La accepted a **Scottish district** amendment—calli on Conference, "recognising that the pres rating systems in England and Scotland are n only unfair in their incidence between lo authorities as well as between individuals, but a also incapable in many areas of supporti increased expenditure," to urge the Governme to increase the amount of grants to local autho ties and to allocate such grants on the basis need. As local government officers, Mr. La argued, they ought to show that they were co cerned with the development, improvement, a maintenance of social services. But the r problem in achieving that was a financial or Moreover, if they could solve the proble of mounting rates they would remove the greate obstacle to an improved Charter.

W. F. WHITE, **Weston-super-Mare,** opposin agreed that the present rating system was unfa but warned delegates that increased Governme grants meant increased Government contr The solution, he suggested, lay in increasing loc authorities' taxing powers.

CONFERENCE RECESS—On the sunny veranda outside the Floral Hall café.

P. H. HARROLD, N.E.C., asked Conference t reject the motion on the ground that it was matter of policy which was not the concern an officers' organisation, and that in any even the Government was preparing a Bill to centrali rating and valuation. Conference accepted h view and rejected the motion.

W. E. SKILLEN, **Bromley,** urged the N.E.C. t consider action to discourage the continuance a system of local government administrati such as that existing under education administr tion schemes, whereby local authorities exercise delegated powers through officers in the servic of the delegating authority. No man, he sai could serve two masters, but the education schem placed the officer in a position where the coun which employed him and the divisional executi whom he was required to serve might come in conflict. Such a situation was not likely to brea men of independence and initiative.

A. E. NORTROP, N.E.C., supporting from th floor, declared (without contradiction) that on officers concerned with educational administr tion really understood what was implied by th motion. He therefore suggested that Conferen

NALGO to Recruit Voluntary Hospital Officers

ould refer it to the N.E.C. to determine policy. onference agreed, after hearing an assurance om Mr. YOUNG, that the N.E.C. would accept for consideration.

C. C. ORWIN, **Lindsey County**, formally moved s branch's motion on workmen's compensation, plaining that he wished to accept the Birming- m amendment and, since this would supply e meat to the sandwich, he would leave it to rmingham to chew.

E. R. SHUTER, **Birmingham**, followed, telling onference that the amended motion asked the .E.C. to consider expanding the Charter sick- ss scheme to provide allowances to officers ot covered by the Workmen's Compensation cts during incapacity resulting from personal jury by accident arising out of and in the course their employment. At present, said Mr. nuter, every manual worker, whatever his come, was entitled to workmen's compensation ; it the black-coated worker could claim it only his salary were below £420 a year. Lindsey nd Birmingham believed that all officers in- apacitated by injury at work should receive eekly payments comparable with compensation ants, irrespective of the duration of the in- apacity, and additional to any superannuation lowances which might be paid. It was not an ternative to the existing sickness scheme, but plea for continuation of payments when there as permanent incapacity after an accident at ork. Recent legislation providing for that— he National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) Act— ight not come into operation before 1950, so A L G O should fill the gap.

A. E. S. YOUNG, **N.E.C.**, accepted the motion nd Conference approved.

HOSPITAL WORKERS

"Forlorn and Forgotten Band"

L. S. RICHARDSON, **Middlesex**, championing he cause of that "forlorn and forgotten band f local government officers who work in hos- itals," introduced a motion instructing the .E.C. to press for the establishment forthwith f posts under the Charter in all public hospitals nd, in view of pending legislation, to recruit taffs of voluntary hospitals. He found it ard to believe that the Association was alive o the future if it was content to represent nly those hospital workers who had already oined its ranks and ignored potential members n voluntary hospitals.

Although for years there had been much ublicity for the underpaid nurse and the over- orked medical staff, the public had never heard f the hospital administrative staffs. Their pitiful alaries in many public hospitals were the result f years of underpayment and the difficulty of aking decisive action when the health of patients as at stake. They could not strike ; whatever appened, they had to carry on. But it was heir right that the Charter should be adopted n all public hospitals forthwith. Some hospital ouncils had paid lip-service to the idea, but that as not enough. The time had come for local uthorities to appreciate the value of the work f their administrative staffs and pay accordingly. he alternative to speedy action by the N.E.C. as likely to be the loss to the Association of ll hospital members under the new regime. lready, in Middlesex, there was difficulty in olding members uncertain of their future ; but ecisive action by Conference would strengthen he Association's grip.

W. PITT-STEELE, **N.E.C.**, accepted the motion, hile refuting the suggestion that nothing had een done for the administrative staff of hospitals hen, only a month earlier, the N.J.C. had dopted a scale of salaries for hospital stewards. Conference adopted the motion.

Association's Bankers

The two following motions—one to assist nancially members suspended without pay and he other to set up a fighting fund—were with- rawn, and D. E. CHILDS, **Essex Rivers Catch- ment Board**, moved that the Association's banking usiness should be transferred to the Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd. (Bankers) if its terms ere found to be more favourable than those of he present bankers. He was willing to accept he **Luton** and **Derbyshire** amendments, the first sking the N.E.C. to examine the terms of other anks as well as the C.W.S., and the second instructing it to report back to Conference next ear.

Opposing both motion and amendments, J. H. ROBINSON, **honorary treasurer**, suggested that there were some things best left to the N.E.C., and this was one of them. Delegates might be interested to know that about last Christmas the Joint Stock Banks reduced their terms to local authorities, and NALGO had secured a reduction in the terms offered to it. He would not give details, but assured Conference that the terms were as good as a first-class local authority would get. Thus answered, both motion and amendments were withdrawn.

SPEED-UP OF BUSINESS

Forty Minutes Left—and Forty Items

At this stage, with more than forty items still on the agenda and only as many minutes to go, the President suggested that it might speed up proceedings were the N.E.C. to state its policy on each motion first ; then, if movers saw there would be no opposition from the platform, they could condense their remarks and save the agenda from the guillotine. Conference approved, and the tempo of proceedings changed from fast to furious, each item being either agreed without

. . . The tempo of the proceedings changed from fast to furious . . .

discussion, accepted by the N.E.C. as a reference to it, withdrawn by the mover, or put to the vote. Of the eight motions on which a vote was taken, only three were carried:

A **Metropolitan district** proposal put by S. A. HUGHES, to delete from the rules the present requirement that, in electing N.E.C. members, each member must vote for a number of candidates equal to the number to be elected in his electoral area. This was carried against N.E.C. opposition. Conference evidently approving Mr. Hughes' claim that it was wrong to insist that members should vote for a stated number of candidates and not allow them free choice provided they did not exceed the number to be elected.

An N.E.C. motion to improve No. 46 of the Association's Rules governing procedure for filling a casual vacancy on the N.E.C., which was carried subject to the acceptance of an Inverness amendment to extend from ten to 21 days, the time allowed to distribute, collect, and return voting papers to Headquarters.

An N.E.C. motion to include in the Rules a formal prescription of the scale of subscriptions approved by Conference two years ago. To this several branches had moved amendments seeking to alter the scale, but of these three were rejected and the rest withdrawn.

No "Specialist" Negotiators

Of the five motions lost, the first, **Middlesbrough's**, proposed that the N.E.C. should co-opt expert members from the gas, electricity, transport, and nursing services when involved in negotiations of a specialist character concerning them. While opposing it, on the ground that the N.E.C. did not want to be tied down, E. A. S. YOUNG promised that the N.E.C. would do the best it could both for the industry and the Association. Opposing an amendment—also rejected—to include education welfare officers among those who should be co-opted, E. L. RILEY said that as the Association's work expanded it would be necessary to make more use of paid officers and less of voluntary service

Next to fall was **Bolton's** motion, moved by A. CLARK, who sought to transfer the election of the Association's honorary officers from branches (by block vote) to district committees, each branch representative to have one vote. Opposing this for the N.E.C. H. BLIZARD maintained that voting for honorary officers should be related to the number of members in the branch rather than the number of representatives on the district committee, since there was no uniformity in branch representation on district committees—to which Mr. Clark retorted that the branch block vote reflected the views of the branch secretary, not of the rank and file, and that the only logical course was to give the right to vote to those who had the right to nominate. But Conference supported the N.E.C. and the *status quo*.

No Two-Year Tenure for N.E.C.

Third to be lost was **Dunbartonshire's** proposal to put the N.E.C. in office for two years instead of one as at present.

Moving it, T. SPENCE, **Dunbarton**, confessed that, having served on the N.E.C. for a short time, he had been greatly surprised at the amount of work it had to do. It took a man some time to understand how it worked (hear ! hear !), and it was some time before a new member made any headway. Local authority elections were held every three years, and he was only asking for one every two years for the N.E.C.

For the N.E.C., G. LLEWELYN modestly left the discussion to Conference, while pointing out that, if it were approved, consequential alterations would have to be made to other Rules, and the N.E.C would have to be authorised to suspend certain annual procedures.

This brought J. P. PHOENIX, **North Western and North Wales district** to the microphone to remark maliciously that Mr. Llewelyn's statement was the "most touchingly coy" he had ever heard—reminiscent of the chorus girl who, on being offered a wrist watch, said "Really, you didn't ought to do it !" (laughter). For himself, he trusted the N.E.C. implicitly—for twelve months (laughter). Conference evidently agreed.

Next to go was **Brentwood's** proposal that the N.E.C. examine means of increasing the representation of urban and rural authorities upon it. After J. H. TYRRELL, for the Council, had opposed, stressing that it was the duty of every N.E.C. member to represent all types and classes of officers, regardless of the type of authority he came from, V. J. LUCK, the proposer, urged the N.E.C. at least to consider the resolution. But the plea was not taken up, and Conference would not support it.

District Committee Reforms

Last to be rejected was a four-fold proposal by **Gloucester City**, amended by **Essex County**, that the basis of representation of branches on district committees be made uniform ; that district grouping should be revised to eliminate unwieldy areas ; that district committee rules should include a provision for a card vote if required ; and that district committees should pay all expenses of branch representatives attending their meetings.

Dealing with each point for the N.E.C., L. C. ST. LEGER YEEND said that uniformity of representation was impracticable ; if a district committee wanted to revise its rules to include a card vote and would submit them to the N.E.C. they would be considered ; the district committees could not pay the expenses of all branch representatives without a further increase in subscriptions.

Arguing the case for the motion, H. H. BYARD, **Gloucester City**, said that district committees were not being run on a democratic basis today. Some branches had to send representatives 200 miles, and could not afford the cost. F. J. MACEY, **Essex County**, complaining of unwieldy districts, pointed out that if all branches sent their full quota, a meeting of the Metropolitan District Committee would number 400. But Conference was unmoved.

Agreed by general consent without a vote were these motions to amend the Rules of the Association :

Rule 13 (*b*), moved by the **N.E.C.**, to rectify an inexactitude in the phrasing which stated that in certain circumstances the right to vote was lost to "the branch" when "members of the branch" was intended.

Rule 39, moved by the **N.E.C.**, to correct a similar inexactitude as in Rule 13 (b).

C. J. Newman Inducted as President for 1947-8

Rule 2, Definition of "Retired Member," moved by the **N.E.C.,** to remove an inconsistency in the Rules and permit retired members in certain circumstances—if, for instance, they held honorary office—to sit on the N.E.C.

Rule 2, Definition of "Local Government Officer," moved by the **Scottish district** and **Glasgow** branch, to extend the present definition to include an officer employed by "any board or other authority authorised by enactment or by Charter of incorporation or otherwise to undertake hospital or public services."

Rule 41, moved by the **N.E.C.,** to provide that voting papers should be sent only to the secretaries of branches which had sent all money due from the branch to Headquarters.

Rule 47, moved by the **N.E.C.** (accepting an **Inverness** amendment), to modify the procedure in the event of a second election for N.E.C. members being necessary because of an equality of votes.

Should NALGO Change its Name?

Motions and amendments referred to the N.E.C. for consideration were:

A **Northmet** proposal to consider a new title more accurately describing the functions and scope of the Association now that it caters for staffs of public and private utility undertakings and many of its members are shortly to be transferred to "nationalised" services.

A **Norwich** move to amend Rule 25 so that, in the event of a card vote being taken at Conference, branches would be required to cast a straight vote for or against in accordance with a majority decision of members, and would not be allowed to split their votes.

Two **Brighton** motions designed to secure that elections of N.E.C. members, both at the annual election and at an election to fill a casual vacancy, shall be conducted on an up-to-date register of members, not, as at present, on a register which, when the annual election is held, is six months out of date.

A **Hinckley** suggestion—to which **Richmond (Surrey)** offered an alternative—for giving financial aid to branches with fewer than 100 members, so that they might send a full complement of delegates to Conference.

Motions and amendments withdrawn by the movers were:

One by the **Scottish district** and **Dunbartonshire branch** to establish, by amending Rule 18 (a), an honorary officer's eligibility for re-election—after W. E. Veasey, N.E.C., had denied that the existing rule made such officers ineligible for re-election, and had pointed out that most were, in practice, re-elected year after year; and

A **Sunderland** motion to make membership of the Benevolent and Orphan Fund synonymous with membership of NALGO, with a compulsory increase of subscriptions, of which 13 per cent of the total would go to the Fund; and an amendment by **West Cornwall** to increase the B. and O. life membership subscription to five guineas.

Thus, at 4.58 p.m.—two minutes before Conference was due to end—delegates completed consideration of the notices of motion and amendments on the agenda. There remained, however, two important and entirely non-controversial items: the induction of the Association's President for 1947-8, and the adoption of votes of thanks to the retiring President and to all whose work had contributed to the comfort and success of Conference.

THE NEW PRESIDENT

Brilliant Career in Service

Rising to perform the first function, the retiring President, D. J. Parry, observed that there was little need for him to introduce Mr. Newman to delegates. All had heard his statesmanlike speech that morning in the debate on T.U.C. affiliation and his many fine speeches at previous Conferences and all knew that he possessed in full measure two major attributes of a NALGO President—a deep and sincere enthusiasm for the Association and all its work, and the ability to lead and represent it in its contacts with the Government and outside groups and bodies.

Mr. Newman had had a brilliant career in local government and enjoyed the rare distinction of having been made town clerk only three years after he entered the Service. After four years' service in the first world war, in Mesopotamia and India, he took up the study of law and, in 1921, was awarded the Clements Inn Prize, having secured first place in the Solicitors final Examination. After six years in private practice in Wrexham, he became, in 1927, assistant solicitor at Exeter, and three years later was appointed town clerk, a post he had filled with distinction ever since.

He was today a junior vice-president of the Society of Town Clerks, honorary solicitor of the County Boroughs' Association, vice-chairman of the housing committee of the Association of Municipal Corporations and a member of its law committee, and was for nine years a member of the Central Housing Advisory Committee. Throughout the war, he was civil defence controller for Exeter, and in October, 1942, was given an immediate award of the O.B.E. for "outstanding courage and devotion to duty" during two severe air-raids on the city (cheers).

Mr. Newman had been a keen member of NALGO from the moment he entered the service. He had served as chairman and president of his branch, chairman of the South Western district committee, and had been a member of the N.E.C. for twelve years. On the N.E.C., he has sat on almost every committee, was for several years chairman of its education committee and was a member of the reconstruction committee.

In Mr. Newman, therefore, the Association has a rare combination of those qualities required in its President, and he was certain that, during his year of office; he would lead the Association to ever greater strength and influence (cheers).

Then, amid loud and prolonged cheers, Mr. Parry placed the ribbon bearing the Presidential badge round his successor's shoulders, thus formally inducting him to the Presidency.

Thanking Mr. Parry for his "extremely flattering remarks," of which he only wished he could feel deserving, the new President said that he was proud to be the first Scots-born President of the Association (cheers). He was grateful to his employing authority for having given him the necessary time to do his NALGO work, and particularly to his colleagues in the office who had shouldered so much extra work and extra responsibility to enable him to attend Association meetings during the past twelve years or more and would doubtless continue to do so during his year of office (cheers). He would serve the Association throughout the coming year to the utmost of his ability (prolonged cheers).

Tribute to Past-President

Rising again, to perform the first duty of his new office, Mr. Newman expressed on behalf of all their thanks and appreciation to Mr. Parry for his work as President (cheers). Conference was indebted to him for the able way in which he had handled the biggest agenda in the Association's history and got it through practically to time.

Replying, Mr. Parry said that he had had a wonderful year, and had enjoyed almost every moment of it. There had been times when he had felt the responsibility of his office, but thanks to the generous and willing assistance given him his difficulties had been smoothed out. He had faced the Conference with great trepidation, but delegates had been generous and shown the true NALGO spirit throughout.

He could not allow the occasion to pass without a word of thanks and tribute to another of their leaders who was appearing on the platform for the last time as a member of the N.E.C.—Mr. F. Harrod, who that year retired from the service and thus from the Council.

Mr. Harrod was well known, both as one of the country's foremost educationalists—he was for many years Director of Education at Coventry—and as a leading figure in the Association. His forthright advice and vigorous statesmanship would be sadly missed. For him, retirement had not meant any slackening of activity, and he was now equally active in an entirely new field, as secretary of the committee set up under the Polish Resettlement Act for the education of Poles in Britain.

Mr. Harrod replied that he was leaving with great regret, but with confidence in the future both of the Service and of NALGO. Mr. Parry had referred to his new task of endeavouring to educate the Poles who were being settled in this country. We had given them a pledge that because they fought so well for the Allies, we would not force any of them to return to Poland if they were unwilling to go. They were scattered all over the country, most of them isolated, experiencing great difficulty in expressing themselves in English, and feeling a "bit out of things." If delegates would contact Poles in their districts and give them a little social life and friendship, it would be fulfilling the country's pledge and helping him greatly in his task (cheers).

Finally, Mr. Parry proposed votes of thanks, all carried with acclamation, to The Mayor and Corporation of Southport, and the local Conference committee, and in particular, Mr. Sykes, its chairman, Mr. Milne, its secretary, Mr. Rimmer, manager of the Floral Hall, Mr. Dawson, chairman of the committee throughout the greater part of its work, but compelled by illness to give up the task at the last moment, and Mr. Edgar Perrins, the town clerk of Southport.

After Messrs. Sykes and Milne had replied briefly, delegates and platform joined in the traditional lusty singing of "Auld Lang Syne" and "The King," and just twenty minutes beyond its scheduled time, NALGO's thirty-seventh annual Conference came to an end.

"AULD LANG SYNE"

Left to right: H. Russell, J. E. N. Davis (chief organisation officer), L. Bevan, Miss W. Hamilton (H.Q.), W. L. Riley, E. A. S. Young, J. H. Warren (general secretary), D. J. Parry (immediate past President), C. J. Newman (new President).

A CONFERENCE CONFESSION BY JASPER

ERNEST first saw her at the meeting on Monday morning and made the odious clicking sounds with his top set which, with him, pass for a wolf howl. I pointed out that the business of the meeting was public relations and that his private affairs, with or without the "e," had best be postponed. But I had to admit that his enthusiasm was not misplaced: being a Treasurer's man, he has a good head for figures.

"You won't make it," I whispered, during an argument on the publicity value of documentary films. "She's with a bloke already."

"Child's play," said Ernest confidently. "Sticks out a mile. Two new delegates from a small branch, hanging together for mutual protection on the first day."

I must confess that I thought no more about Ernest and his prospect until the afternoon. The education meeting must have been about half-way through and I was tacking down the Marine Lake in a small yacht with a girl who happened to be holidaying in Southport, explaining to her the importance of NALGO's education policy, when I saw Ernest with a girl on the promenade. It was the same girl, there was no mistake. There was a swing of the hips, a toss of the head one could not forget. Ernest was deep in a monologue and I knew that my report to the branch executive on the proceedings of the education meeting would go unchallenged.

I met Ernest at dinner. We had booked at the hotel for dinner, bed and breakfast, so it was only for lunch that he went to Woolworths. I asked him what he thought of the afternoon meeting and his replies were vague rather than evasive: in other words, he was thinking. Deep thoughts. Probably evil thoughts.

As we went upstairs to change for the reception, he remarked to me thoughtfully, "Did you notice what a good hearing that bloke got this morning with just a couple of wise-cracks in a short speech?" When I agreed, inquiringly, he went on: "Some people would give a lot to put over just one short speech that went down well at Conference."

Again I agreed, but pointed out that Ernest's habit, when excited, of whistling his "s's" would, over a microphone, cause more than enough comment. He dismissed the warning with a lofty wave of the hand, and, having polished his shoes with my pyjama jacket, stalked out to his assignation.

My partner and I arrived at the civic reception comparatively early, but were swept out again on the tide of delegates who had discovered that the only bar on the premises was strictly reserved for the N.E.C. When we returned later the first person I saw was Ernest, somewhat agitatedly warding off a pincer movement by two N.E.C. members who seemed determined to carry off his partner to their private lair. Observing that I was not alone, his welcome was almost effusive and he hurriedly organised our party of four in the direction of refreshments. Having in mind his A.P.T. grading, I allowed him to order the supper which, to my surprise, he did without demur, merely giving me a warning leer in the direction of the N.E.C. types hovering near by. This danger I averted simply by asking each in a loud voice whether he had brought his wife and children with him. I must find out some day whether they are married.

Before Ernest returned with the coffee, his partner explained that she was secretary of a small branch and had been so worried because she had to move an amendment. But everything was all right now, she added contentedly. Ernest was going to "fix it" for her.

Just then the fixer returned, and his determined efforts to change the conversation forced me to dance with his partner to get the lowdown. It was pitiably simple. Lacking any other line, Ernest had promised to make the girl the hit of Conference by supplying her with the wittiest three-minute speech ever delivered by the lips of woman. It was a revelation of the lengths to which the man would go.

At half-past two the next morning, as we sat on our beds drinking bottled Guinness out of tooth-glasses, I taxed him with it.

"That child is relying on you, you sizzling spell-binder, and you've never made a witty speech in your life."

"Wit," said Ernest, regurgitating ponderously. "has nothing to do with it. I have analysed the successful speeches at that microphone and they consist of nothing more than five wisecracks and three minutes' padding. All I need is five wisecracks—and that will be easy."

Next morning he left very early to book two seats, pointing out that neither of them was for me; and he hardly had the grace to look ashamed when he found he had left it too late and was obliged to use one of the three I had fixed with the daughter of one of the cleaners the night before.

As usual, the most cheerful point in the morning's proceedings was the Treasurer's financial statement, and each time J. H. ROBINSON collected a laugh Ernest glanced sideways at Cynthia with an air of "You ain't seen nothing yet."

Mr. Robinson is no beginner at presenting financial statements. He told delegates blandly that he did not mind them looking at their watches while he spoke; but he would take the hint if he saw a man look at his watch, shake it, and then listen dubiously. Later, at an equally good gag, Ernest took a paper from his pocket and crossed something out: then I began to understand. I suddenly remembered having seen a line something like that in an American magazine in our bedroom the night before.

Going upstairs that evening I found that Ernest had abstracted my ticket for the theatre. Since I had refrained from making a date on the assumption that I would be using it, I felt rather peeved and, before going out on a solo pub-crawl, viciously stuffed the American magazine in my pocket.

At my first pub of call I examined the magazine carefully. As I had expected, Ernest had meticulously marked his selected wise-cracks with a tick and dutifully cross-ticked them on entry into his manuscript. Now was mine enemy delivered into my hand.

I hastily toured the pubs frequented by delegates and some hours later returned to our hotel feeling cheerfully confident and replaced the magazine under Ernest's Conference papers.

Proceedings on the Wednesday morning started slowly and were concentrated on reconsideration of the national Charter. It was apparent that delegates were inclined to treat this as being of the "Atlantic" rather than the "Magna" variety in its manifest need for revision.

With delightful and characteristic inconsequence, Conference instructed the N.E.C. to obtain a "no detriment" clause in the Charter but firmly refused an amendment to make this retrospective. I suggested to Cynthia, who was sitting between us, that this was a case of "status quo ante ma non troppo," which produced a polite but somewhat blank smile.

At about noon, delegates realised that Conference was half over with four-fifths of the agenda still to be tackled, and F. W. HUMPHRIES, of the North West District, suggested that the next 70 items be referred to the N.E.C. en bloc. The President left delegates to digest this over lunch.

Returning in the afternoon, I remarked to another delegate that the promenade seemed to be knee-deep in torn-up impromptu speeches—a crack which the twirp used publicly later in the proceedings. The pessimism of their authors was justified, for Conference agreed—only those who had hopefully refused to sacrifice their speeches opposing—to accept the North Western suggestion, with the proviso that the two pages of motions and amendments on the promotion examinations should be discussed. This was a subject on which Ernest felt strongly since, having passed the I.M.T.A. Intermediate in 1939, at the fifth attempt, he had in 1946 found that all the juniors in the office had been granted exemption from it in return for their services to a grateful country. Since his prospects of passing both parts of the final were problematic, it was understandable that his views were somewhat warped.

Thursday's session opened with the T.U.C. debate, now as much a part of Conference as are the sea songs of the last night of the Prom. season. Not for the first time the "platform" was too fast for the "floor," and the N.E.C.'s clever tactics succeeded in dividing in order to rule. The divisions were the familiar ones of This Year, Next Year, Sometime, and Never; speakers supporting the first three implored delegates to vote for the N.E.C. if unable to agree with the particular amendment. With so much secondhand goodwill, the triumph of the N.E.C. was never in doubt and after the vote everyone moved out for a cup of coffee save those poor souls who sat with silently moving lips, preparing to earn their expenses by a few minutes' casual crucifixion at the microphone.

"Knee-deep in torn-up impromptu speeches"

At last we reached the motion which Cynthia's branch sought to amend. The mover was a curvaceous blonde who opened her speech with a wisecrack which earned a laugh from all save Cynthia, who paled a little and crossed off a line in her script. The rest was sheer massacre. In two minutes, all five of Ernest's selected witticisms had been put over and Cynthia was tearing her speech into very small pieces with a rather dreadful deliberation. She turned to Ernest and said with ominous gentleness: "The trouble with you is you talk too much—to blondes!" With that she swept down to the mike and gained a round of applause by formally moving her amendment without the customary split infinitive.

Ernest sat looking dazed as he realised that his boast that these few wisecracks were his own invention left him with no defence whatever. I hastily intercepted Cynthia on her way back from the mike and congratulated her on the sensible brevity of her remarks. I added innocently: "But I thought Ernest was preparing something rather different for you."

"Ernest!" she started—so we went out for tea. In fact, it took her until 2 o'clock the next morning to convey her opinion of Ernest's infamy. But we enjoyed the Conference dance all the same—though I had to keep a wary eye open for a curvaceous blonde whose gratitude might have proved embarrassing.

Ancillaries Report All-Round Progress

*All N A L G O's ancillary societies held their annual general meetings at the Floral Hall, Southport, on Friday, June 13. Points made by their chairmen—*A. BOWKER *for the Approved Society;* SAM LORD *for LOGOMIA;* T. NOLAN *for the Provident Society and* A. PINCHES *for the Building Society—are reported below:*

Approved Society

May be Society's Last A.G.M.—Absorption Next Year

YET another increase in membership—this time to 35,500—was reported at what may prove to be the last annual general meeting of the N A L G O Approved Society, N A L G O's first ancillary organisation, begun in 1912.

Although the appointed day for the National Insurance Act, under which Approved Societies were to be taken over by the central government, was July 5, next year, there was a possibility that the Society would be absorbed before then.

The growth of the Society since 1913 was illustrated in the Annual Report, which compared:
800 claims a week today with 15 then;
850 local correspondents today with 63 then;
35,500 members today with 5,000 then; and
£330,000 invested today with £33,000 then.

In 1930, the Poor Law Officers Approved Society was amalgamated with the N A L G O Approved Society and several of the pioneers of the Poor Law Approved Society continued as members of the committee of management.

During the year under review additional benefits were still higher than those paid in 1943, despite slight reductions made as a result of the large number of claims of members returning from the Forces.

Altogether more than £51,000 had been paid out on the year's claims representing an increase over 1942 of £2 per claim. Although it had been necessary to reduce grants, a careful watch would be kept to insure that there would be no surplus when the Society ceased to function.

The Society's Matlock Convalescent Home had restored 235 members to health and strength during the year. Increased cost of maintenance had made it necessary to restrict the period of free residence to two weeks in twelve months and to charge four guineas a week for extensions.

Logomia

Big Jumps in Insurances, but Not Yet At Peak Level

THE increase in LOGOMIA's new business last year had been remarkable; even so it had not yet reached "full swing." Premium income had risen to £120,574—some £12,000 above the 1945 level and more than one-third above 1939.

Total funds had shown an equally favourable rise—from £907,000 in 1945 to £991,000 last year, an increase of some £84,000, and nearly double the 1939 figure. Gross interest on the life fund investments had increased from £3 14s. 8d. per cent to £3 15s. 7d. per cent in the year, despite downward trends in investment yields generally. Capital security was of even more importance: ordinary and preference stocks, shown in the balance sheet at £154,104 and £96,350 respectively, represented 45 holdings—none larger than £16,000—in 45 reliable companies.

Progress recorded included:

Life assurance—policies issued up from 344 to 821 and claims down from 49, involving payments of £15,367, to 37, involving £8,750.

Fire and householders risks—More than two thousand new insurances had been taken out during the year, but claims had risen from £4,540 to £7,824—32 to 40 per cent of net premium income—in large part as a result of the crime wave. Even so, LOGOMIA had not put up its premiums to meet burglary and fire risks, although other companies had done so and were charging 7s. 6d. per cent for comprehensive household cover against LOGOMIA's 4s. 3d.

The practice of adding back profits had increased the fire insurance fund by nearly £3,000 and the employers' liability fund by nearly £1,000 during the year. For administration expenses, only 33⅓ per cent of the premium income had been charged to the fire fund.

Fidelity—The amount transferred to profit and loss had increased from £5,116 to £5,377.

Motor—Shortage of cars had prevented more than a moderate though none the less substantial increase in policies from 13,570 to 14,745 and in advances for hire purchase, from £1,764 to £10,000.

Provident Society

£24,000 in Sickness Benefits

ALTHOUGH the first actuarial valuation of the Society's Sickness scheme had revealed the rates of sickness of members to be "much lighter than those of standard experience," benefit paid from the common fund had increased by £2,725 to £24,179 last year. In the same period income from contributions had increased by £2,249 to £41,286. Benefits paid were unlikely to fall for a few years, but would probably increase—one of the best "selling features" of the scheme, to which local correspondents should be alive. There had been 911 resignations—mainly of married woman temporaries leaving the service—and 632 enrolments into the sickness scheme during the year. In the first five months of 1946 they had gained 210 members.

Hospital and Nursing Home Scheme—Despite the prospect of new insurance and health Acts membership had gone up 363 last year, with a further 458 in the first five months this year.

Building Society

£2,000,000 Lent to Buy Homes

IN advancing £2,000,000 for house purchase last year the Society had broken all records: the total was four times as much as in 1945 and nearly double the previous record in 1937. In part, of course, the increase reflected the rise in the price of property, but that was not the whole of it: the number of mortgages granted had topped 2,000—more than 600 above the previous record. This was the main reason why advances had had to be restricted; the Society was not built to take so great a volume of business.

As had already been announced, from July 1 the Society would offer 80 per cent advances to owner-occupiers of all kinds of property—old or new and that under construction. It was hoped that in the "not too far distant" future the proportion advanced would be increased.

Ten New Members Elected to N.E.C.

G. R. Ashton (*South Western*) | Miss C. L. Greedus (*Metropolitan*) | J. B. McCann (*Metropolitan*) | Miss M. W. Curtin (*West Midland*) | F. W. Goodchild (*Eastern*)

THIS year's elections provided ten new members for the National Executive Council—the largest influx of new blood since 1943—and there is still one vacancy to be filled, caused by the resignation of A. G. BOLTON, on being appointed establishment officer at Sheffield. Five of the new members fill seats created by expanding membership. The ten new members are:

GEORGE R. ASHTON, clerk and chief financial officer, **Keynsham U.D.**; vice-chairman, staff-side, South Western provincial council; executive member and ex-chairman, South Western district committee; branch chairman; and secretary, Somerset Boroughs and U.D.C.s. Association.

Miss CONSTANCE L. GREEDUS, electricity department, **Walthamstow**; secretary, local joint committee; member branch executive and women's sub-committee; co-opted member N.E.C. women's services sub-committee; and chairman, Metropolitan district women's sub-committee.

J. B. MCCANN, first-class (A) assistant, **L.C.C.**; branch secretary; and member, Metropolitan district committee.

Miss MARIAN W. CURTIN, S.R.N., matron, Moxley Hospital, **Wednesbury**; branch president; executive member, West Midland district committee. Miss Curtin worked as ward sister in L.C.C. hospitals for ten years and up to 1941 was night sister in charge, Park Hospital, Hither Green, first-aid-post.

F. W. GOODCHILD, director of social welfare, **Ipswich**; executive member, Eastern provincial council; vice-chairman, Eastern district committee; former branch secretary and president.

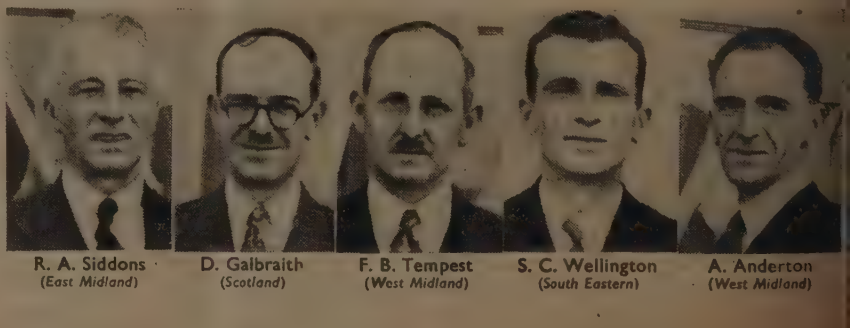
R. A. SIDDONS, finance officer, education department, **Leicestershire**; chairman of the East Midland district committee, and executive member for 25 years; former branch secretary and treasurer.

DUNCAN GALBRAITH, chief cashier, **Paisley**; staff-side member, Scottish Joint Industrial Council; branch secretary and president; treasurer and propaganda committee convener Scottish district committee; member, Scottish Joint Consultative Committee; first chairman; No. 8 area co-ordinating committee.

FREDERICK B. TEMPEST, A.C.I.S., chief internal auditor, **West Bromwich**; branch chairman and former president, treasurer, and auditor; member of local joint committee and West Midland district committee.

SYDNEY C. WELLINGTON, clerk-in-charge, school health services, **West Sussex**; ex-chairman and president of branch; member, South Eastern district committee; and executive member, Southern Home Counties provincial council.

ALFRED ANDERTON, senior accountancy assistant, **Walsall**; branch vice-president and former chairman; vice-chairman, local joint committee; executive member, West Midland district committee.



R. A. Siddons (*East Midland*) | D. Galbraith (*Scotland*) | F. B. Tempest (*West Midland*) | S. C. Wellington (*South Eastern*) | A. Anderton (*West Midland*)

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NAME.....
(BLOCK LETTERS)

ADDRESS.....

Promotion Examination Questions Answered at Education Meeting

THE syllabus of the new promotion examination (reproduced on page 358) was the principal topic of discussion at the Conference meeting of education correspondents held at Southport on June 9. A. E. ODELL, chairman of the N.E.C. education committee, who presided, described it as an essentially practical one. By taking the examination, members would not only get a certificate qualifying them for advancement, but would acquire much information useful in their work. The Association must act quickly to see that proper facilities for study were provided, and he hoped that area education committees and education correspondents would all get to work.

In the discussion which followed, questions put to, and answered by, Mr. Odell included:

Is the promotion examination equal to the examinations of recognised professional bodies?—The next business of the Board is to determine what professional examinations are to be regarded as alternatives to the promotion examination.

What will be the standard of the examination?—It will be comparable with the higher school certificate.

Does the examination apply to promotion to the Clerical Division only, or to higher divisions also?—It applies to all seeking promotion from the General Division.

Is it expected that, since the first examination is to take place in May 1948, promotion after that date will depend on passing the examination or its equivalent?—I cannot answer that at present.

How can members take an examination in May when twelve months are needed to study for it?—Many have done some reading already. The Metropolitan area has prepared a scheme by which some 500 students near London will be ready to sit by May.

Reviewing the work of the past year, Mr. Odell said that special attention had been given to relating N A L G O's educational policy to the national and provincial Whitley councils through which much of the education work might be carried on in future, and to replanning the Association's education department. Recalling that H. SLATER, former principal assistant, education, had resigned on his appointment as secretary to the Examinations Board, Mr. Odell introduced P. F. GREENHALGH, who was now, under the general secretary, responsible for the Association's educational work.

C. J. NEWMAN, the president-elect, followed with an inspiring address in which he asked the meeting to distinguish education in its broader sense from the "cramped, confined, specialised field of vocational training."

Too many people, he said, thought of education as merely the acquisition of facts, with the brain as a sort of pail into which knowledge was poured until it could hold no more. Nothing was further from the truth. A repository was not furnished because it was crammed with furniture. Education was a process of intellectual enlargement, expansion, and inward illumination, with the mind working energetically upon and among new ideas, digesting them, and reducing them to order and meaning. It was that digestive process which mattered in education.

A. E. NORTROP, N.E.C., said that area education committees were building something that would meet the Charter's demands, but it was difficult to co-ordinate arrangements over an area like his own—the eastern district—which reached from the borders of Buckinghamshire to the East coast, and particularly to provide study facilities for officers in rural areas.

L. C. St. LEGER YEEND, N.E.C., reported that, two years ago, when the University of Bristol had begun courses for the D.P.A., a number of "aged and worn-out" officers had enrolled. He himself, 47 and "rather decrepit," had just been told he had been successful (cheers).

Courses, started at Bristol and Exeter, had been extended to Taunton, Gloucester, Plymouth, and Dorchester, and in the first year, more than 100 officers had enrolled.

The time had gone, Mr. Yeend continued, when local authorities were reluctant to allow their officers time off with full pay while undertaking courses. He urged members not to hesitate to ask their authorities for financial help: some would pay up to five-eighths of the University fees.

J. M. ANDERSON, Scottish District Committee, suggested that it was asking too much of a busy officer over 35 with a family to pass a promotion or professional examination; and it should not be necessary if he could do the job to which he sought promotion.

A. S. ROBERTS, Holborn, urged that the education programme would not be complete until there was a university degree in public administration for the local government officer, so that he might compete with the University graduate. Area education committees should consider issuing a panel of names of officers in the district willing to give talks and lectures to help others in their studies, and N A L G O should consider publishing a magazine on local government education.

Replying to the first point, the Chairman said that the institution of a degree was being considered by the Joint Universities Council.

Other points in the discussion included:

Lancashire branch had persuaded the county council to meet up to two-thirds of students' travelling expenses and examination and tutorial fees.

As a result of keeping in close touch with local education committees, Doncaster branch had a representative on the local technical colle advisory board, had secured the establishment of D.P.A. course, and had obtained free exhibitio at the college for all members of the council's sta

The study of psychology might well be includ in the syllabus of the promotion examination.

Some definite attempt to formulate an educ tion policy for all those officers who were goi to be "nationalised" should be made at once.

There was a demand for a qualification f A.P.T. grade staff in the education department.

There was no uniformity in assistance bei given to students to attend summer schoo Some local authorities gave nothing and othe from two guineas up to the full amount. Branch should be told what was a reasonable amount.

The Metropolitan district was offering t awards of £6 each for essays to help studen attend a summer school.

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Sixteen Members in King's Birthday Honours

The names of at least sixteen members N A L G O appeared in the King's Birthd Honours in June, and those reported to Hea quarters are given below.

C.B.E.

C. B. BROWN, director of education, Cumbe land: R. NICHOLAS, M.Inst. C.E., city surveyo and engineer, Manchester.

O.B.E.

A. B. CATHCART, M.Inst. C.E., M.I. Mech. E lately waterworks engineer, Brighton, now retired E. H. COLLCUTT, county road surveyor, Cor wall: C. T. FULCHER, borough engineer, Shor ditch, one time branch president and secretary J. B. OGDEN, town clerk, Bath, branch presiden

M.B.E.

J. GAFFNEY, local fuel overseer, Chislehur and Sidcup: L. G. GODDARD, divisional surveyo Hampshire: Miss I. M. GROVES, vocation guidance officer, Kent: J. T. JONES, food executi officer, Port Talbot: R. J. LAYLAND, maste Islington institution, joint honorary secretar N.A.A.L.G.E; A. MARSH, county health inspe tor, Essex: J. A. REEVES, local fuel oversee Stoke-on-Trent: E. O. SADLER, chief officer, park cemeteries and allotments, Sheffield: J. SHEFFIELD, for services to Edmonton C.D. Assn.

B.E.M.

C. RAYNES, chef, public assistance institutio Leicester.

Election of Honorary Officers & N.E.C. 1947-

THE result of the election of the Association's honorary officers and National Executive Council is as follows (new members of the Council being marked with an asterisk):

HONORARY OFFICERS
(all returned unopposed)

PRESIDENT: C. J. Newman, O.B.E., town clerk, Exeter.

VICE-PRESIDENTS: P. H. Harrold, town clerk, Hampstead; E. A. S. Young, assistant education officer, Willesden.

TRUSTEES: A. G. Bolton, establishment officer, Sheffield; G. Llewelyn, ch. clerk, finance department, Monmouth; A. Pinches, ch. rate collector, Croydon.

HON. TREASURER: J. H. Robinson, F.I.M.T.A., F.S.A.A., city treasurer, Leeds.

HON. SOLICITORS: *England*, P. H. Harrold, town clerk, Hampstead; *Wales*, D. J. Parry, M.A., B.Sc., county clerk, Glamorgan; *Scotland*, R. McGill, county clerk, Moray and Nairn.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

METROPOLITAN—E. A. S. Young, asst. education officer, Willesden, 8,690; A. E. Odell, deputy town clerk, Poplar, 8,096; W. Pitt-Steele, Supt., Aldersbrook Homes, East Ham, 7,349; A. Pinches, ch. rate collector, Croydon, 7,113; W. Strother, borough engineer and surveyor, Bethnal Green, 6,160; J. W. Edmonds, clerical officer, P.L.A., 5,387; Miss M. Anderson, Supt. of Meals, West Ham, 5,090; *J. B. McCann, 1st class (A) asst., L.C.C., 4,845; *Miss C. Greedus, clerk, electricity dept., Walthamstow, 4,809.

NORTH WESTERN AND NORTH WALES—E. L. Riley, establishment officer, Liverpool, 11,622; L. H. Taylor, 1st committee clerk, Salford, 10,537; E. H. Mason, dep. gen. manager and traffic sup., Manchester, 10,320; H. Russell, secretary, gas department, Stockport, 10,280; J. S. Underwood, ch. audit officer, Blackpool, 10,243; J. H. Tyrrell, deputy public assistance officer, Lancashire, 9,446; A. S. Garnett, clerk in charge of supplies section, engineer and surveyor's dept., Liverpool, 8,670; A. Clark, ch. administrative asst., engineer and surveyor's dept., Bolton, 8,122; W. Rowlands, ch. financial officer, Rhyl, 6,626.

NORTH EASTERN—J. Y. Fawcett, cashier, South Shields, 3,704; R. E. Heron, ch. asst. director of education, Sunderland, 3,362; F. Bainbridge, committee clerk, Durham C.C., 3,057.

YORKSHIRE—Miss E. Dawson, senior clerk, educatio dept., Leeds, 6,732; A. G. Bolton, ch. accountan asst., Harrogate, 6,671; T. Nolan, ch. clerk and accoun ant, electricity dept., Leeds, 6,347; W. R. Beever hospital steward, Sheffield, 5,568; F. C. Corbishley, c clerk, city treasurer's dept., York, 4,304; E. M. Bourn asst. accountant, Hull, 3,967. (A. G. Bolton has sinc resigned, creating a vacancy.)

EAST MIDLAND—G. T. Belton, rating and valuatio officer and dep. clerk, Basford R.D. 5,452; R. Evans, cler Blackwell R.D., 5,306; J. Pepper, sen. committee cler Nottingham, 5,212; *R. A. Siddons, finance office education dept., Leicestershire, 4,320.

WEST MIDLAND—H. R. Jones, accountancy ass Wolverhampton, 5,488; T. W. Maslen, audit ass Coventry, 5,220; R. L. Evans, 1st class clerk, Warwic shire, 5,188; *A. Anderton, accountancy asst., Walsa 4,673; *Miss M. W. Curtis, matron, West Midland joi hospital board, 4,576; *F. B. Tempest, ch. intern auditor, West Bromwich, 4,375.

EASTERN—E. F. Bacon, asst. education office Norfolk, 2,998; A. E. Nortrop, dep. borough educatio officer, Luton, 2,538; *F. W. Goodchild, director of soci welfare, Ipswich, 1,972.

SOUTH EASTERN—W. O. Dodd, dep. town cler Brighton, 4,545; N. W. Bingham, clerk in charge welfare, Kent education committee, 4,359; W. A. Baker, ch. sanitary inspector, Maidstone, 3,162; *S. Wellington, admin. clerk in charge, school health service West Sussex, 2,032.

SOUTHERN—J. W. Moss, div. education office Bucks, 3,087; E. R. Davies, dep. clerk, Berks C.C., 2,37 P. H. Brown, ch. cashier, passenger transport dept Portsmouth, 2,093.

SOUTH WESTERN—R. T. Shears, princ. asst., clerk dept., Devon, 3,452; C. J. Newman, town clerk, Exete 3,374; *G. R. Ashton, clerk, Keynsham U.D., 3,360 L. C. St. Leger Yeend, clerk, Sodbury R.D., 3,222.

SOUTH WALES AND MON.—L. Bevan, clerk an steward, Hensol Castle, M.D. Colony, Glamorgan, 3,338 G. Llewelyn, ch. clerk, county treasurer's dept., Mo mouthshire, 2,901; H. W. John, sen. clerical asst city engineer's dept., Cardiff, 2,743.

SCOTTISH—S. H. Brodie, ch. div. clerk, assessor dept., Glasgow, 6,770; R. Adams, clerical asst., assessor dept., Edinburgh, 5,644; J. Penny, ch. asst., city assessor dept., Dundee, 4,357; *D. Galbraith, ch. cashier, financ dept., Paisley, 4,287; J. Brown, ch. committee cler Lanarkshire, 3,901.

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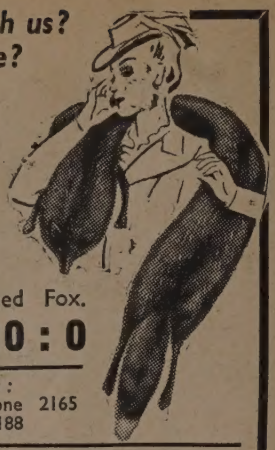

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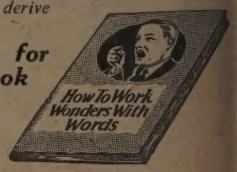

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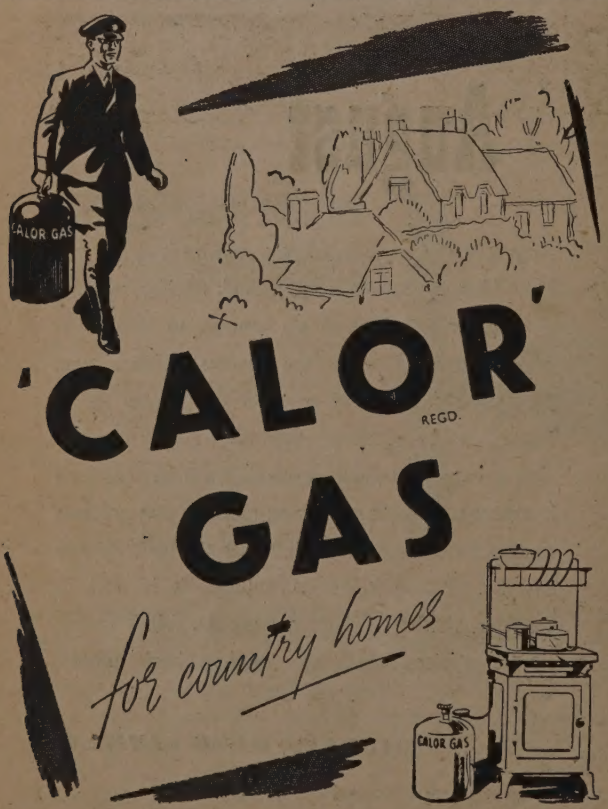

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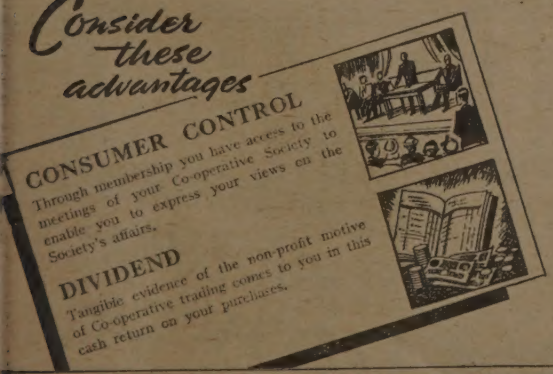
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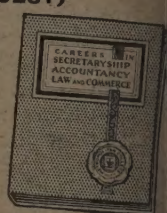

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